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BY

LYMAN ABBOTT



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1898

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PREFACE

THIS volume is one in a series of wholly independent volumes, which attempt to apply the principle of evolution to the elucidation of spiritual truth. Of these there have already been published "The Evolution of Christianity;" "Christianity and Social Problems;" and "The Theology of an Evolutionist." This volume seeks to employ that principle in the interpretation of the writings of the Apostle Paul. I hope to follow it with one or more volumes in application of the same principle in the interpretation of the other Biblical writers.

Much if not most of the interpretation of Paul assumes that he entered on his ministry after his retirement in Arabia with a completed system of theology, that this system underwent no material change, that it was the same in his first preaching as at the end of his life, and is the same in the epistles to the Thessalonians as in the epistle to Colossians or the pastoral epistles; that, in brief, the various epistles are to be regarded as though they were different chapters in a book written at one time, by one and the same mind, in elucidation of the same system of thought.

This volume is written on a very different assumption. It assumes that Paul grew both in grace and in knowledge after his conversion ; that he learned much while he was teaching ; that he neither at once threw off entirely the Pharisaic traditions in which he had been reared, nor acquired at once a completed system of philosophy to take their place ; that the revelation to him of truth was not an instant revelation flashed upon him in the hour when the risen Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus, but was a gradual revelation growing out of that vision ; that some of the conceptions of the kingdom of God with which he entered on his ministry were subsequently modified and partly laid aside ; that conceptions of that kingdom which are to be found in his later epistles were only gradually attained ; that there are differences, and important differences, if not inconsistencies, in the teaching of the different epistles ; that his point of view underwent material changes, and that these changes can be traced in a careful study of his epistles in the order in which they were written. In short, it is assumed in this volume that, as there is a progress of doctrine discernible in the Bible, and a growth in the knowledge of God manifested in the difference between the earlier teachings of Moses and the later teachings of John, so there is, in a lesser degree, a

progress of doctrine discernible in the writings of individual writers in the Bible. Such progress in the writings of Paul this volume attempts to trace. The unity of Paul's theology is — so at least this volume assumes — not that of a system completed at the outset, but that of a system growing in the mind of the teacher, a system which was formed by the very process by which he gave expression to it. If this is thought to be inconsistent with belief in inspiration, my reply is, I regard as erroneous that theory of inspiration which has ignored when it has not denied Paul's declaration concerning himself: "We know in part and we prophesy in part," and "We see in a mirror darkly." Such a theory neither accords with the claims of the Biblical writers nor with the nature of their writings.¹

For over a quarter of a century the writings of Paul have been a favorite theme of study with me. I have sought, in a somewhat wide range of reading, to get such light as I could from the work of previous students. It would be impossible for me to give credit to the authors to whom I am indebted, both because it would involve an extensive bibliography of the subject, and because, doubtless, in many cases, I have imbibed ideas from authors and have now forgotten the source from which they

¹ See *The Theology of an Evolutionist*, chap. iv.: The Evolution of Revelation.

came. The main authority for the interpretation of Paul's writings contained in this volume is Paul's own writings; next some study of the social conditions of Rome in the first century, and of Greek literature — both philosophical and poetical — in that and the three or four preceding centuries. The text of Paul's writings on which I have chiefly relied has been that of Westcott and Hort; the exegetical commentaries which I have found most helpful are those of Meyer, Alford, Ellicott, Stanley, and Jowett. But I acknowledge also especial obligations to Professor McGiffert's "*The Apostolic Age*," whose interpretation of Paul appears to me the clearest, most rational, and most spiritual which I have met; Conybeare and Howson's "*Life and Epistles of St. Paul*," which, in spite of much subsequent development of Biblical criticism, remains the best account of the times and circumstances of the apostle; Dr. Ramsay's "*The Church in the Roman Empire*," and "*St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*," which furnish fine illustrations of interpretative insight coupled with and aided by a scholar's familiarity with the surroundings of the apostle; Dr. George Matheson's "*Spiritual Development of St. Paul*," and A. Sabatier's "*The Apostle Paul*," — the first of which traces the spiritual development of St. Paul from a study of his epistles, the second of which conversely traces

the progress of his thought in his epistles from a study of the spiritual development of the apostle. It only remains to add that, in giving extracts from Paul's letters, I have generally followed neither the Old Version nor the New Version, but have given a free rendering of my own, in the endeavor to afford the English reader a clearer insight into the meaning of the original. The pastoral epistles — those to Timothy and Titus — are not included in this volume, partly because there is some uncertainty as to Paul's authorship of them, but chiefly because they are ecclesiastical rather than philosophical, and therefore do not materially add to our understanding of his spiritual thought.

LYMAN ABBOTT.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., *September*, 1898.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE	xi
I. THE POINT OF VIEW	1
II. PAUL'S EDUCATION AND CONVERSION	19
III. PAUL THE MISSIONARY	44
IV. THE EARLY CHURCH	62
V. THE LETTERS TO THE THESSALONIANS	76
VI. PAUL AT CORINTH	93
VII. THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS. I.	116
VIII. THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS. II.	147
IX. THE SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS	164
X. THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS	181
XI. THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS. I.	211
XII. THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS. II.	227
XIII. THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS. III.	253
XIV. THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS. IV.	269
XV. THE LETTERS TO THE EPHESIANS AND THE CO- LOSSIANS	286
XVI. THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS	303
XVII. CONCLUSION	318

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

The following chronological table of St. Paul's Life and Epistles is taken from Bishop Lightfoot's Biblical Essays, pages 221-223.

While there is some question about the dates here given, and I have placed Philippians after Colossians and Ephesians, there is no reason to doubt that the general order and substantially the dates, of the letters and the main events in Paul's life, as recorded in the Book of Acts, occurred as represented in this table.

A. D.

- 34 St. Paul's conversion.
He visits Arabia, and returns to Damascus. (Gal. i. 17; Acts ix. 20-25; 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.)
- 37 First visit to Jerusalem. (Acts ix. 26; Gal. i. 18.)
- 37-44 To Cæsarea and Tarsus, visit to Syria. (Acts ix. 30; Gal. i. 21.)
- 44 St. Paul brought by Barnabas to Antioch. He stays there a year. (Acts xi. 26.)
- 45 Second visit to Jerusalem with alms. (Acts xi. 29, 30.)
- 46, 47 At Antioch.
- 48 First missionary journey (Acts xiii. 1-xiv. 26) with Barnabas. He visits Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and returns to Antioch.
- 51 Third visit to Jerusalem with Barnabas (Gal. ii. 1 seq.; Acts xv. 1 seq.) Second missionary journey with Silas. (Acts xv. 36-xviii. 22.)
- 52 Crosses into Europe. First visit to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. (1 Thessalonians.)
- 53 At Corinth. (2 Thessalonians.)
- 54 Leaves Corinth for Ephesus. Returns to Antioch. Third missionary journey. (Acts xviii. 23-xxi. 15.) To Ephesus again.

- 55 At Ephesus. Second visit to Corinth. (2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1, 2.)
- 56 At Ephesus.
- 57 At Ephesus.
- 58 At Corinth. (Romans.) Third visit to Philippi. Fourth visit to Jerusalem.
- 59 At Cæsarea.
- 60 Voyage to Rome, and shipwreck at Malta.
- 61 Arrival at Rome.
- 62 At Rome. (Philippians) Spring. (Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon) Autumn.
- 63 Spring. Release of St. Paul. His subsequent history is not known with any certainty.

The letters to Timothy and Titus, if written by him at all, were written subsequent to his release. According to a uniform tradition he was beheaded under Nero in Rome; the probable date, A. D. 67 or 68.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

CHAPTER I

THE POINT OF VIEW

THE literary history of the world furnishes no parallel to the influence exerted by the writings of Paul, except such as is afforded by the history of the Bible in which those writings are found. Of the life of the man himself we have but a fragment, — perhaps I should rather say a series of fragments. The story of his life, as it can be gathered from the Book of Acts, includes nothing of his youth or early education, nothing of his closing years and death.¹ What we know on these subjects we are

¹ My judgment coincides with that of Dr. Ramsay in “placing the author of the Book of Acts among the historians of the first rank.” — *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, p. 4, ff. Comp. McGiffert, *The Apostolic Age*, p. 346 : “If anything is clear, it is that the Book of Acts is not a mere collection of documents, but a well ordered and artistically arranged composition.” But whether we regard it as written by Luke or edited by some unknown writer out of older documents, among which were the “we” passages from the pen of Luke, so far as Paul’s life is concerned, the book gives us only a fragment, which it is not always easy to harmonize with the autobiographical memorabilia contained in Paul’s Epistles.

left to gather from autobiographic references in his Epistles and from a not too trustworthy tradition. The story in Acts begins at his conversion, when he was probably over thirty years of age. It ends with him a prisoner in Rome. Thus a mere fragment of his life is all that is afforded us. And his writings are mere fragments. He has left no treatise ; no work on philosophy. One of his letters may perhaps be regarded as a summary of his general teaching, but that was not written for the purpose of furnishing such a summary. Jowett's translation of Plato occupies four volumes, in the revised and new edition five volumes, of considerable size. A part of these volumes is taken up, it is true, with introductions ; but if these were taken out, and we had simply the dialogues of Plato, we should have not less than three octavo volumes of considerable magnitude. If we accept all the extant letters which any one supposes Paul wrote, we have a little less than sixty pages of a moderate-sized octavo. If we take those letters which by the consent of nearly all modern scholars are attributed to Paul, we have a little over forty pages. That is all.¹

These letters are all we have, and probably all we ever shall have, of the writings of Paul. They

¹ Few scholars now attribute Hebrews to Paul ; Sabatier and McGiffert both question Paul's authorship of the Pastoral Epistles I. and II. Timothy and Titus. — *The Apostle Paul*, p. 264 ff. ; *The Apostolic Age*, p. 398 ff. Ramsay assumes Paul's authorship of them. — *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 246.

are letters written to particular churches to meet particular exigencies. In writing them Paul had no conception that he was writing for future generations. He did not dream of his own immortality. He did not consciously write for posterity. He formulated no system, was not ambitious to be the founder of a philosophy. And yet no teacher outside the Bible has ever been studied as Paul, and no teacher in the Bible has ever been studied as Paul, save only Christ himself. There are libraries in Europe and in this country in which there is a measurably complete collection of what the great Shakespearean scholars have written concerning Shakespeare; but it could almost be said of the books written and of the sermons preached concerning Paul, as John said, hyperbolically, of the things which Jesus did: If they were all recorded and brought together, the world itself could not contain them.¹ For eighteen centuries men have been speaking in interpretation of this writer, and they are likely to continue speaking in interpretation of him for centuries to come.

How happens it that this Jewish rabbi of the olden time has produced such an impression? How happens it that, whereas the classical authors of that time are studied by only the few, and the

¹ "The literature which bears upon St. Paul is so extensive that a complete account of it would be as much beyond the compass of this article as it would be bewildering to its readers." — *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xviii. p. 430. A complete bibliography of the subject would itself make a volume of considerable size.

rabbinical authors of that time are studied by scarcely any — this man, only a fragment of whose life we possess, and only fragments of whose teachings we possess, has been and still is studied with such passionate enthusiasm by the many? It is partly, doubtless, because he is enigmatical; we are all interested in solving riddles. But the principal reason is this: Paul translates Christianity, which in its original form was Hebraic, into the intellectual forms of the Occident.

The Hebrew was not a philosopher.¹ It might almost be said of him that he did not think, he acted. He concerned himself with truth only as it was life, and for truth apart from life he cared not. A farmer goes to his door in the morning and looks at the clouds. Is it going to rain or clear to-day? he asks. Not because he cares anything about the clouds; he cares only whether he shall get in his hay or not. But the scientist looks at the clouds to learn what is the truth of meteorology. The teacher goes to the schoolroom and studies there child-nature, simply that, by understanding the nature of the children before him, he may better be able to instruct their intellect, to inspire

¹ "One who is devoted to the search for fundamental truth; in a restricted sense, one who is versed in or studies the metaphysical and moral sciences." — *Century Dictionary*. It is in this sense I use the word here. The Hebrew was not interested in truth as a science or system, but only in truth as it was applied to and effective in life. Matthew Arnold has described very clearly the difference between the Hebrew and the Greek mind, in this respect.

their life, to broaden their horizon, to make them wiser, better, larger men and women. The psychologist goes into the same school-room to study child-nature, plying the children with hard questions even more thoroughly than the teacher, but he does this, not for the pupil's life, but that he may, out of the questions and answers, construct a philosophy of child-nature. The Hebrew character was like the farmer's character and the teacher's character. He cared for truth only as it had a bearing on life.

We have in the Old Testament a collection of Hebrew literature ; in that collection there is not a book that can properly be called a book of philosophy. There are three volumes which are called "Wisdom Literature," — Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. But no one of these is a book of philosophy in the modern sense of the term. The Book of Job discusses the problem of suffering, but it reaches no conclusion. It is a great epic poem, not a philosophical treatise. It begins with life and suffering a mystery ; and it ends with life and suffering a mystery. The teaching of the Book of Job is this : Philosophy is vain and idle ; the answer to the enigma of life which we have borrowed from other nations is false ; there is no answer to the question, How could a righteous God have made a suffering world ? life is an insoluble mystery. The Book of Proverbs is a collection of coined aphorisms, ethical precepts, spiritual precepts ; but it contains no generic philosophical system. Out of

them, perhaps, we may construct a philosophy, but they do not of themselves embody a philosophy. Ecclesiastes discusses the mystery of life from three points of view, — that of the pleasure-seeker, that of the cynic, and that of the student, — but ends with simply this: Fear God and keep his commandments. The result of the discussion is not a philosophy of life, but the practical conclusion — do right.

Accordingly, in the Old Testament we never find definitions. We find some quasi-definitions, such as that of the prophet, “What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” but of the kind of discussion of what religion is and how it is to be defined, which we find in Max Müller, for instance, there is no illustration from Genesis to Malachi. We find in the Old Testament no creeds, no theological system, and no attempt to formulate a system. The Hebrew was content to live. He revered God, but he did not define him. He urged men to practical duty, but he did not discuss the theoretical basis of practical duty. He had no theories of life. He lived; that was all. When Jesus Christ came, he also made no attempt to formulate a philosophy. He disclosed the spirit of life with greater clearness than it had ever before been disclosed. He brought new impulse and new inspiration into life. But he did not define. He did not philosophize.

On the other hand, the Greek cared compara-

tively little about righteousness in life, and very much about truth in thought. He cared also about beauty, both in form and in conduct. Indeed, the word he chiefly used to express excellence of character was a word which means beauty, — nothing else. Paul, coming at a time when Hebraism was breaking from its shell, when Christ was giving to it a new life, translated the new life into terms of Greek thought. He enabled men to think about what before they had only done. He is the link between life and philosophy, the intellectual interpreter of spiritual life. This is the reason why he is studied and admired ; it is also the reason why he is by so many repudiated. For there are still these two elements in the community. There are many men who do not care to think ; they only wish to do. They do not want a philosophy of life. They are quite willing to live empirically. But, generally in Europe and America, and particularly in the Germanic races, the Greek type of man dominates intellectually. We are not content simply to live ; we desire to harmonize our life and our thinking. And especially the children of the Puritans desire to do so. They wish to think truly as well as to do righteously.

Paul is in this sense the founder of theology, as Copernicus was the founder of astronomy, Bacon the father of the inductive system, and Plato the originator of modern philosophy. Paul was the first man to attempt to translate the Hebrew vision of life into the Greek form of thought ; the Oriental

perception of life as conduct into the Occidental conception of truth as thought. He is the intellectual interpreter both of the Old Testament and of the New ; both of Moses and of Christ.

In our study of Paul I ask the reader to lay aside all theological preconceptions. Mediæval scholasticism has overlaid Paul with a formalism of its own, and imputed to Paul a philosophy of its own. Paul has been studied in the light of the sixteenth century, not in the light of the first, and in the entirely legitimate attempt to apply his teachings to modern problems of thought and life he has been studied as though he had those problems before him when he wrote. Sometimes the conceptions of religion against which he consecrated his life's best energies have been imputed to him ; sometimes a later half-Christianized paganism foreign alike to him and to his age. The desire to find authority for "doubtful disputations" has led the disputants to go to Paul, not to learn with open mind what he has to teach, but to find in his teaching support of the positions of a modern controversialist. And out of this and kindred misuse of Paul's Letters has grown such misconception of his spirit as is indicated in the following letter, not long since addressed to me :—

"Has not religious persecution, denominational intolerance and bigotry, resulted rather from the theology of the Apostles than from the gentle, loving life, spirit, and teachings of Christ? Is there not and has there not always been in the pulpit too much interpretation of the

teachings of Christ in the spirit of Saul, and too little interpretation of Paul in the spirit of Christ?"

The reader who takes up this volume to read it through the atmosphere of such preconceptions, who believes that Paul was the first of that long line of theologians who have corrupted the simplicity of Christ's teaching by scholastic refinements and far-fetched distinctions, the reader who has been accustomed to regard Paul as the founder of a school of thought rather than as a minister to noble living, and to identify him with the misinterpreted ninth chapter of Romans rather than with the incomparable thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the reader who measures Paul's teaching by its relations to Augustinianism or Calvinism, Puritanism or Methodism, oblivious of the peculiar thought and life problems of the nascent church of the first century, must lay aside these preconceptions altogether, or he may as well lay aside this volume. What I ask him to do is to imagine that he has come unexpectedly across an old and curious collection of nine letters written by one Paul, formerly called Saul, and that he wonders who and what manner of man this Paul was, and what was the object of his writing, and what the meaning of these letters. If he will take up this volume in this spirit and read it through, he will then be able at the close of his reading to form his judgment as to whether the book justly and fairly interprets the unknown writer. But if he assumes at the outset that Paul is a Calvinist or an Arminian, a Conser-

vative or a Radical, the founder of a school or the critic of a philosophy, he will not be able to understand my understanding of Paul, since his point of view will be so absolutely different.

Assuming, then, that the reader is willing and able to lay aside his point of view, and for the little time we are together to accept mine, it becomes necessary to indicate certain elements in the character of Paul which in this volume I apparently take for granted, though in reality this estimate of his character has grown out of the same studies from which this interpretation of his writings has proceeded.

First of all we have to realize that Paul is a prophet, a seer. Some men grope their way to truth; some men rise like birds upon wings, and, looking down upon truth from above, see it spread out beneath them in God's sunlight. These are the poets and seers. Such a man was Isaiah, Plato, Carlyle, Emerson, Browning; such a man was Paul. He has been studied as though he were a logician, a deducer of truth from premises, a formulator of a system for the system's sake, an ancient John Calvin. The student has been puzzled to trace the logical connection in his Epistles; often there is no logical connection. Paul is not a logician; he is often unlogical, sometimes illogical. He uses arguments, not because they are philosophically sound, but because they will accomplish his purpose. His mind is not of the type of Aristotle; it is of the type of Isaiah.

He was not a student of philosophy. There is

in his writings nothing to indicate that he was familiar with Greek philosophy; nothing to indicate that he had even heard of Plato or Socrates.¹ He probably had heard of them, but he never refers to them. His life was not that of a philosopher. It was not spent among books, but among men. He was an evangelist, traveling from province to province and from city to city, preaching sermons and occasionally writing letters of counsel to groups of Christ's disciples who were his friends. He did not use truth as a philosopher uses it, — that is, as one who admires truth for its intellectual beauty, or a system of truth for its harmonious proportions. To him truth was instrumental, — a means, not an end. He used it to help men. "All scripture which is inspired," he writes to Timothy, "is profitable." Profit, not symmetry, is the measure of inspiration. "I kept back nothing," he says to the Ephesian elders, "that was profitable unto you." Profit to the hearers is his standard in teaching. So far as he could see that truth would be profitable to men, he used it — and no further. He was born and bred in a dialectic age, educated in a dialectic school, and speaks to audiences trained in dialectics. He therefore uses the dialectic method. But he does not arrive at truth by logical processes; he perceives it. It is, he says, "spiritually discerned." He is a seer and prophet, overlaid by rabbinical education, and using the dialectic method to commend truth to an age pervaded, alike in Hebrew,

¹ But see note, p. 20, chap. ii.

Greek, and Roman communities, by the dialectic spirit.

Such a man as this puts language to a severe test, and it breaks down under his use. A pioneer in truth never can use words in their old-time meaning. The missionaries in China to-day are divided into two parties on the question which Chinese word they shall use in order to teach the simple proposition that God is love; because the Chinese have no word that means God, and this is because they have no conception of God. A personal Father who loves his children is not in their consciousness, and therefore it is not in their language. Paul had ideas that ran beyond the consciousness of his age, and ran, I sometimes think, beyond the consciousness of our age; but he had to use the language that existed in his time and put his ideas into that language. Words cracked under Paul's use of them. He wishes to tell men what righteousness is, but he has no word which will represent his conception of righteousness. He wishes to tell men how he conceives divine righteousness can be obtained, and there is no language by which his conception can be expressed. The language does not exist, because the idea does not exist. He takes old words and puts new meanings into them. Scholars have gone back to the Septuagint to see how the Greek word was used there. They have gone to the classic Greek to find out how it was used there. But Paul does not use the pivotal words in his teaching as they were used

by the Septuagint or by the pagan Greek. We are to learn Paul's meaning by studying Paul's use, by comparing word with word and phrase with phrase and passage with passage, that we may grope our way to the transcendent life which broke into fragments the words which he employed to utter life.

Paul was a seer and a prophet ; and as seer and prophet, not as philosopher and theologian, he is to be studied. He used Greek words to express ideas which the Greek mind had never entertained, and we must learn their meaning and clothe his words therewith. He was, moreover, an orator. The orator always thinks of his audience when he speaks or writes. He is not interested in the simple exposition of truth ; he is interested to get this particular truth at this particular time into the minds of the particular men and women before him, — whether in fact or in imagination. Whether he is a writer or a speaker, if he has the oratorical temperament, his object is to put his intellectual life into the life of other men and women ; and that was emphatically Paul's character. Men have taken Paul's account of what was said of him by his enemies as though it were a true description of him : " His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." Why do they not go to the life itself ? Look at this man in certain critical epochs of his life. He is set upon by a mob in the temple, beaten, half killed, rescued from the mob by the soldiers, and there, with his garments all disheveled and covered with dust, asks, " May I speak to the mob ? " raises

his hand, and the mob hushes and listens. Henry Ward Beecher himself, in England, never won a greater triumph of oratory than did Paul on the temple stairs at Jerusalem. A mob seizes two of his friends and rushes into a theatre with them. Paul can hardly be dissuaded from rushing into the theatre to rescue his friends, because he feels sure of his power to calm that audience with his words. He preaches before Felix, and Felix trembles, who never was known to tremble before or after, — hard, insensitive, callous Roman that he was. Paul is an orator, and he uses language in oratorical forms. He puts himself into the mental attitude of his auditors ; makes it his business to understand the men he is talking with. To the Greek he became a Greek ; to the Jew he became a Jew ; he became all things to all men. There was no man he did not aim to understand ; no man in whose place he did not try to put himself that he might put life into him.

This man with a life too great for the language of his time, enthralled by his dialectic education and breaking through it, using logical forms but not logical processes, logical in his speech but not in his mental structure, full of a passionate devotion to truth, but only because truth ministers to life, Hebrew of Hebrews, and using the dialectic method only that he may impart Christian life to the Greek world, and through Greece to the heart of Europe — this man is over-full, and his words pour out of him as water pours out of a bottle when it is held upside down. Sometimes he quotes an

objection and dismisses it without an answer ; sometimes he answers it ; sometimes it is difficult to tell whether he is a critic or an advocate of a doctrine ; sometimes, like Browning, he hardly knows himself which he is.

Nor is this all. He sometimes addresses himself ; argues with himself ; does not see the truth clearly before he begins to utter it, but thinks, as it were, aloud, feeling his way to the truth in his writing. He was born a Pharisee, bred a Pharisee, educated a Pharisee. In his writing we can sometimes see him struggling to free himself from the Pharisaic bands that bind him, and finally emerging and carrying his audience with him by the very struggle.¹

This man — prophet, not philosopher — poet, not logician — orator, not scholastic — has written no treatise, only letters, and a letter is never the sole product of the man who writes it. To know Paul's writings we must know not Paul only, but the men to whom he writes.

“There lies the letter, but it is not he
As he retires into himself and is ;
Sender and Sent-to go to make up this
The offspring of their union.”²

This, which is Lord Tennyson's canon for the interpretation of letters, is to no author more applicable than to Paul. These letters of his are not

¹ See, for illustration of this, *post*, ch. xiii.

² From an “Unpublished Sonnet” in Preface to *Memoirs of Lord Tennyson*, by his son.

theological treatises. They are true letters, written by one who possessed the true oratorical temperament, who wrote always for immediate effect, and in the study of whose letters "Sender and Sent-to" must be alike studied. He writes in one way to the Colossians, in another way to the Thessalonians, in another way to the Corinthians. He does not care whether he is consistent with himself or not. To him, as to Emerson, consistency is the vice of small minds. He only cares to convince men and win them to himself and to his Christ.

Finally, Paul's style has all the vices of letters proceeding from such a man, and dictated extemporaneously; for Paul did not write, he dictated. It abounds in parentheses, interpolations, corrections, and involved sentences; sometimes the sentence is left unfinished. When the letter was ended, he sometimes added a postscript in his own hand. See what big letters I have written, he says — for he was half blind, and wrote as half blind men do, in large characters.¹

Imagine, then, this man writing one of these letters. He has seen a vision of the truth; he would lay down his life to give that truth to the men he loves, — loves, as he says, the more, the less he is loved. But they do not see; and he cannot understand why they are so blind. He thought they understood him, and they did not. They have fallen away again; they have gone away from the

¹ Gal. vi. 11, Rev. Vers.: "See with how large letters I have written unto you, with mine own hand."

truth which they once received from him. His heart is full. He sees before him those to whom he wishes to speak ; they are as though they were present with him. He begins to talk with them, as he paces up and down the room ; the amanuensis keeps pace as well as he can with the increasing torrent ; the speaker thinks as he speaks, and corrects, modifies, inserts parentheses, and, as it were, interlineations, as he dictates. The thought grows in expressing ; the inadequacy of language oppresses him ; he turns the truth back and forth in endeavor to shed its light. He phrases an objection and sweeps it away in one short sentence or leaves it contemptuously to refute itself, or the transcending truth of his own experience passes beyond all bounds of exposition and he breaks forth into a rhapsody of praise or prayer. When the letter is finished, he has neither time nor patience to revise. He adds a salutation, sometimes a longer postscript, sends it in haste, and then goes about other work which is pressing upon him.

This is the Paul whom we are to study. Not a John Calvin, rather a Browning ; but a Browning on fire with a moral intensity such as Browning never knew ; a Browning who believes that the kingdom of God is close at hand ; a Browning who believes that every day brings it closer and still closer ; a Browning who believes that the night is almost gone and the day-dawn is at hand ; a Browning who believes that he possesses the secret which will abolish injustice from government and fear

from the hearts of men, and will usher in the kingdom of righteousness and the glory of God.

Philosopher among poets is Browning; poet among philosophers is Paul: prophet, seer, preacher, orator, interpreter of Christ's spirit to the thought of the world.

CHAPTER II

PAUL'S EDUCATION AND CONVERSION

PAUL was born in Tarsus.¹ His ancestry was Hebrew, and he was by birth, by inheritance, and by education a Hebrew.² His city was a Greek city in its atmosphere, though under Roman domination. It was a famous university town; it was claimed in that time that the university was greater than that of Alexandria.³ It was not only a university town, but notable for Greek scholarship, perhaps scarcely less so than Athens itself, possibly even more so. Thus this boy breathed a Grecian atmosphere in his boyhood. But he did not receive a Greek education. His knowledge of Greek literature would be something like the knowledge which a Huguenot boy might get in Paris in the time of the Revolution respecting the literature of Diderot and Voltaire; for the Hebrews regarded Greek literature, and with some show of reason, as grossly immoral.⁴ A Hebrew would no more have set his

¹ Acts xxi. 39; xxii. 3. For convenience I retain throughout this volume his later name of Paul.

² Phil. iii. 5. "An Hebrew from Hebrews," *i. e.* from Hebrew parents on both sides.

³ See Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays*, p. 205.

⁴ He never materially changed his estimate of paganism. Rom. i. 22-26; 1 Cor. vi. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Gal. ii. 15; iv. 8; 1 Thes. iv. 5.

boy to the study of the Greek poets and dramatists than a Puritan in the reign of Charles II. would have set his boy to study the dramatic literature of that age. There are three or four citations from the Greek poets in Paul's writings, but they are simply popular proverbs such as any man might pick up in common intercourse in society.¹

He learned the trade of tent-making, for the

¹ "There is no ground for saying that St. Paul was a very erudite or highly cultivated man. An obvious maxim of practical life from Menander (1 Cor. xv. 33), a religious sentiment of Cleanthes repeated by Aratus, himself a native of Tarsus (Acts xvii. 28), a pungent satire of Epimenides (Tit. i. 12), with possibly a passage here and there which dimly reflects some classical writer — these are very slender grounds on which to build a supposition of vast learning." — Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays*, p. 206; comp. McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, p. 114 note; Sabatier's *Apostle Paul*, p. 47. A correspondent, however, sends me the following interesting parallel between utterances of Plato and of Paul, as an indication that Paul was not unfamiliar with Plato. He adds, "Of course these quotations may be mere coincidences."

~ PLATO

Now if death is like this, I
say that to die is gain.

The hour of departure has
arrived, and we go our ways, I
to die and you to live — which
is better God only knows.

I am very far from admitting
that he who contemplates ex-
istences through the medium
of thought sees them only
"through a glass, darkly," any
more than he who sees them in
their working effects.

PAUL

For me to live is Christ, and
to die is gain.

I am now ready to be offered,
and the time of my departure is
at hand.

To be with Christ, which is
far better.

For now we see through a
glass, darkly, but then face to
face.

rabbinical law required every boy to learn a trade ; but he was not, apparently, dependent upon it for a livelihood ; there are indications in his life — to some of which I may refer hereafter — that he was not poor, that at least he had means of support independent either of his industry or of the churches which he served.

It was his boast that he was not dependent upon the latter ; and he apparently never took anything by way of salary from them, though he gratefully acknowledged gifts, which they occasionally sent to him.¹

How long he lived at Tarsus we do not know. By the age of twelve² he had gone up to Jerusalem,

Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to any one, whatever evil we may have suffered from him.

See that none render evil for evil unto any man.

But necessity was laid upon me — the word of God I thought ought to be considered first.

For necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel !

I am a man, and, like other men, a creature of flesh and blood, and not of " wood or stone," as Homer says.

We also are men of like passions with you.

I speak because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged any one.

We have wronged no man ; we have corrupted no man ; we have defrauded no man.

The life which is unexamined is not worth living.

Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.

¹ Acts xx. 33, 34 ; Phil. iv. 10-17 ; 1 Thess. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8.

² Acts xxii. 3. " Brought up " signifies from early youth. Com-

where later, and very likely at that time, his sister was living — whether at that time married or not, we do not know ; she was married afterwards.¹ Here he entered the great Jewish university, under Gamaliel,² one of the great Hebrew scholars of his time, and studied with passionate devotion the literature, the law, and the hopes of Israel. He has told us what the results of this study were. He became not only a Pharisee — that is, a separatist or a Puritan of the time — but one of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, exceedingly scrupulous in belief and in practice.³ He was orthodox of the orthodox. We can therefore tell a little what his beliefs were ; for we know what their beliefs were.

He believed that the law had been given to Moses in the mount ; that every word and every letter of it had been so given. He would have been a great deal more impatient of the Higher Criticism than most impatient critics of that criticism are in our time. He would have had none of it. He believed that Moses wrote every word and every letter of the Pentateuch, including the account of his own death ; and that Moses wrote this by dictation, word for word, as God gave it to him ; unless, indeed, he went still further and believed, as some Pharisees did, that God wrote the book himself in heaven and pare Luke iv. 16 and Acts vii. 20. Jewish children were sent away to school at the age of twelve.

¹ Acts xxiii. 16.

² For history and character of Gamaliel see my Com. on Acts v. 34.

³ Acts xxii. 3 ; xxvi. 5 ; Phil. iii. 4-6 ; Gal. i. 14.

handed it down to Moses on the mount, finished and ready for reading.¹

To understand this law was the supreme object of his study; to obey this law was the supreme object of his life. But that part of this law which most interested Paul was that which interests us the least, — the Levitical or ceremonial part. The argument for the supremacy of this portion of the law was very short and simple, and is not difficult to understand. The moral law — so argued the Pharisees — relates to man's duty to his fellow-man; the ceremonial law relates to man's duty to his God. Justice, mercy, kindness, are obligations due by man to his fellow-man; but to offer the appointed sacrifices, to observe the appointed fasts, to attend the sacred feasts, to obey the Sabbath regulations, to fulfill the required ritual in worship, to perform the ceremonial ablutions, is doing man's duty to God. It is a great deal more important to do one's duty to God than to do one's duty to his fellow-men. It is, therefore, far more important that he should offer the right sacrifice, pay the right tithes, comply scrupulously with the Sabbath and festal regulations, and observe the laws respecting cleanliness and uncleanness, than that he should do justly or love mercy. The declaration of the prophet, that to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God² was all that God required,

¹ See Schürer : *Jewish People in Time of Christ*, ii. 1 : p. 306 ff., p. 337 ff.

² Micah vi. 8.

had long ceased to be orthodox teaching. That Christ had attempted to revive this old teaching of the prophets and put righteousness above ritual was one of the charges preferred against him.¹ With that teaching Paul would have had no sympathy. He could not believe it. To him ritual was the heart of the law. Religion was obedience to ritual. He practiced what he believed. "As touching the law," he said, "I was blameless." He fasted twice a week: on the fifth day, because on that day Moses had gone up into the mount; on the second day, because on that day Moses had come down again. His year was full of fastings. He celebrated in fasts almost every great calamity in the national history: the overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the burning of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, the murder of Gedaliah by Ishmael, the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. He was scrupulous about the Sabbath. He would carry no bundle on the Sabbath day; would not walk any considerable distance, and never, under any circumstances, for pleasure or recreation. He was scrupulous about the Jewish feasts as well. He was always at the synagogue when the Sabbath day came round. Whenever he returned from a walk, the first thing he did was to get the ewer and basin of water that stood in every Jewish household, and to wash at least his hands. He might have touched a Gentile; then he would have been unclean; and had he eaten with unclean hands, the

¹ Matt. ix. 11-13; xii. 2; Luke xi. 37-42; Mark vii. 2.

uncleanness would have entered into him and degraded him.

And yet he was not satisfied ; for he had an ethical nature. He half-consciously believed that there was something more in righteousness than hand-washing, Sabbath observance, synagogue attendance, tithe-paying, and fasting. He believed in justice and mercy, in temperance and righteousness ; and although, as touching the ceremonial law, he was able to be blameless, yet his ethical ideal always transcended his practice, and he never attained it. He has given us a graphic picture of himself at this time. It is true that this picture probably represents his later interpretation of his earlier experience. We know that Bunyan's pictures of his own condition are not such as he would have painted when he was a tinker. We know that John B. Gough's account of his own experiences is not such as he would have given when he was a drunken stage actor. So the experience of Paul before his conversion was doubtless a vague, uninterpreted, strange unrest, not at all the vivid consciousness as he subsequently described it as perceived from the vantage-ground of a higher experience :¹—

“Once I was living without law. But when the commandment came, sin lived again, and I died ; and the

¹ It must be remembered that his statement that he was the chief of sinners (1 Tim. i. 15), supposing he wrote the letters to Timothy, was made at the close of his life and as the result of his backward look upon it.

commandment, which was in its object life, I found to be in its result death. For sin, taking the commandment as a base of operations, thereby deceived me, and through the commandment slew me. So, then, the law itself is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Then the good becomes death to me. No, by no means. But sin, that it might appear sin, works out death in me through that which is good; that sin, by means of the commandment, might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am fleshly, sold under sin. For what I am working out in life I do not comprehend; for not as I would, do I; for the result of my action I hate. But if the result is hateful to me, I concur with the law that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I working out my life, but that which dwells in me, namely, sin. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells not any good. For to will is present with me; but how to work out that which is good I find not. For the result of my life is not the good that I would, but I practice the evil which I would not. But if what I would not is the result, it is no more I that am working out my life, but that which dwells in me, namely, sin. I find, then, the law that when I would accomplish good works evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God in the inner man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"¹

With the study of the law he studied also Israel's

¹ Rom. vii. 9-24.

hope. Through the long vista of the centuries the literature of Israel had been bound together by a golden thread of promise. From the earliest tradition, when it was said that one should rise through whom man should grind the serpent's head to powder, down to the last prophecy of Malachi, the Old Testament abounds with promises of a Messiah's coming for Israel's redemption. These prophecies and promises he studied, and what he thought about them was something like this: He believed that a Messiah would suddenly appear in power and great glory; that he would put himself at the head of Israel; that all the enemies of Israel would mass themselves against him; that he would either destroy them or would subjugate them. Then, when they had been subjugated or destroyed, Jerusalem would be renovated; the dispersed of Israel from all lands would be gathered together in the Holy Land, and Jerusalem would become the imperial city of the world. The saints who had died and were dwelling in the shadowy under-world would emerge, and with the children of the dispersion assemble in Palestine. Wars and famine, blindness and disease would cease, and the reign of peace and the glory of the kingdom of God would be ushered in, and Israel would be the world-power and Jerusalem the imperial city of the world.¹ It would be easy, were there room, to quote passages from the Old Testament which seemed to give warrant to these expectations. If we take the Bible

¹ Schürer: *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, ii. 2, p. 163 ff.

literally ; if we forget that its poetry is truly poetry ; if we regard it as a book of philosophy, not as a book of literature, it is easy to find chapter and verse to warrant every element in this Pharisaic conception of the Messiah's kingdom. An evidence of this lies in the fact that there are to-day those in Christendom who still believe, substantially, that this result is yet to be brought about, and who have been compelled thus far to postpone from time to time the anticipated consummation.

Imagine, then, Paul as a man of passionate earnestness, whose patriotism was his religion and whose religion was his patriotism ; who believed that the law of Moses was a law handed down direct by God, and who thought that the most important part of that law was the Levitical code ; who believed that a Messiah would come to ransom Israel and make it the dominant nation of the world, and Jerusalem the queen city of the world. To him there come rumors of a strange sect which has arisen in Palestine. We interpret primitive Christianity by the teachings of its converts. We have the Four Gospels, written by those who loved and honored Christ. We have the letters of Paul, written by one who was his devoted follower, and who delighted to call himself the slave of Jesus Christ. But Paul had no such resources at his command. Not a Gospel was written ; not an Apostle had yet written a line. Paul learned about this new sect from its enemies.¹ And if we go, first to the New

¹ There is no reason to suppose that Paul had ever seen or

Testament, and then to the primitive writings of the early days which report what the pagans had to say, and finally to ancient rabbinical writings and their later echoes, we can easily reconstruct the conception of Christianity which came to Paul. It was something like this : ¹

A child, a boy, born out of wedlock, and with the stamp of a bastard on him, has appeared in Palestine.² He has claimed to be the Messiah, the hope of the glory of Israel. He has gathered about him a ragged regiment of the unkempt, the ignorant, and the vicious, — publicans, harlots, drunkards ; in all the nation no learned man, no man of influence, to do him reverence. He has claimed to heal men's diseases and to feed their hunger. He has appealed to their prejudices and their passions, and so has increased the horde that followed him. He has had no word of condemnation for the openly vicious ; he has never denounced drunkenness, or the extortions of the tax-gatherer. But he has found no satire too keen and no invective too bitter for the church and its honored and orthodox leaders. The men high heard Jesus Christ during the latter's life. Had he done so he would almost certainly have referred to the fact. 2 Cor. v. 16 implies the reverse, and the implication is confirmed by the fact that wherever he makes any reference to personal acquaintance with Christ it is to the latter's post-resurrection appearances to him as in 1 Cor. xv. 8.

¹ See Isaac Goldstein's *Jesus of Nazareth* for ancient Rabbinical view of Jesus.

² That this charge, early brought by Jewish enemies against Jesus, was brought against him in his lifetime is, I think, implied by John viii. 41.

in station, the scribes, the theologians, the priests, the members of the Sanhedrim who have descended direct from the seventy whom Moses by the direction of God endued with authority — these he has denounced as liars, robbers, and hypocrites ; he has called them a generation of serpents ; he has told them they cannot escape the damnation of hell. He has not only denounced the lawmakers, he has broken the law again and again. He has set the Sabbath at naught, and told men to carry their bundles on the Sabbath. He has scoffed at the sacred ablutions which are a part of the Mosaic law. He has discarded the sacrificial system, venerable with centuries of use, and blasphemously assumed to forgive men their sins without that sacrifice by which and through which forgiveness can alone be won from a just Jehovah. He has declared that the expectation of a Messiah who will make Jerusalem the queen city and Palestine the dominant nation of the world is a delusion ; that Jerusalem will be destroyed, and of the temple not one stone will be left upon another. The nation has condemned him ; Jehovah has condemned him. God puts the stamp of approval on men by their prosperity and victory ; he puts the stamp of disapproval on men by their suffering and defeat ; and this man has suffered the most galling and ignominious defeat. The law declares that “ he that is hanged is accursed of God,”¹ and this man has been crucified, and thereby thrice accursed : the curse of God as well

¹ Deut. 21, 23.

as the condemnation of the nation is upon him. The Sanhedrim has condemned him for blasphemy ; the Roman government has condemned him for treason, — for he was a disturber of the peace as well as a renouncer of religion ; God has condemned him by his providence. His death should have put an end to this strange superstition. But it has not. His followers have now started the story that he has risen from the dead, and, worst of all, men are believing it, and this strange and ignominious sect is growing in numbers. I am ashamed for my race that such folly and such weakness could find a place in their esteem.

Something like this was Paul's belief, something such his sentiments concerning the Christian sect. He who wrote to the Romans, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," would not have so written had he not formerly believed that this Messianic sect brought disgrace upon his nation.¹ He who wrote to the Corinthians that the foolishness and weakness of Christ were the wisdom and power of God would not have so written had he not once thought the Christian sect notable for its folly and weakness.

In this state of mind he was summoned one day to attend a meeting of the Sanhedrim. Whether he was actually a member of the Court we do not

¹See Matheson's *Spiritual Development of St. Paul*, p. 33: "Is it not plain that Paul deprecates any feeling of shame concerning Christianity, because he has a distinct remembrance of the time when Christianity did present itself to his mind as a thing to be ashamed of?"

know, but the Sanhedrim had been convened, and a Greek was put on trial. In those times the customary method of rabbinical discourse was historical. The rabbi began with the ancient history of Israel, and traced it, in order that he might show the glory of Israel. Stephen, who was originally a Greek and a pagan, but who had become a proselyte to Judaism and then a convert to Christianity, began his speech where the rabbis generally began theirs. Nor did his audience at first suspect his meaning. It dawned upon them gradually. It was a very skillful speech :¹ " Abraham, your father," he said, " was called out of the land of paganism. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was seized because of the envy of the patriarchs and sold into Egypt. Moses was driven into exile by the passionate unpatriotism of a Hebrew. And when, after forty years of exile, he came back to deliver Israel by command of God, Israel would not listen to him, but repudiated him. When at last they followed him to the base of Mount Sinai, where the law was received, they put up the golden calf and worshiped it under the very thunderings of Mount Sinai. Despite tabernacle and temple, they have ever since been rebellious against God." Gradually the audience began to see what was meant, and Stephen concluded it was time to make his

¹ Acts vii. 2-53. It is not necessary to consider whether the Book of Acts gives us an accurate report of this speech or not. There is no reason to doubt that the author has embodied its spirit and the general course of Stephen's argument. For fine analysis of this speech see Sabatier's *Apostle Paul*, p. 42 ff.

application, and he made it with vigor. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised!" he cried, "You call us Greeks uncircumcised: you are the uncircumcised; you have always resisted God; you have always fought against him; you have always persecuted the prophets; you have always repudiated his law; it is no strange thing that when the Messiah came you crucified him; it was like you in your whole history, from the beginning to the end." Then they gnashed their teeth and set themselves to destroy him. Suddenly a light breaks over his face, a light that awes them for a moment, and, looking up, he cries, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." This crowns the blasphemy of his speech, the court becomes a mob, the people rush upon him, and, without waiting for judgment, seize him and carry him from the room. Paul follows. Even then, though murder is in the heart of this people, they do not forget the ceremonial law. It is required that the witnesses shall cast the first stone.¹ Paul takes charge of the cloaks of the witnesses, that they may cast their stones with the greater vigor with unencumbered hands.

On such a man as Paul such a scene must have produced a profound and strange effect. Many men are satisfied to kill an adversary. Paul was not of that kind. Nothing would satisfy him but killing the heresy; and the heresy was not killed. The blow on the lighted iron sent the sparks

¹ Deut. xvii. 5-7.

a-flying ; the Christians fleeing from the persecution which followed the death of Stephen went telling the story of the cross and of the resurrection ;¹ and Paul gnashed his teeth in commingled rage and shame at the fanaticism of this heresy and at the temporizing policy of Israel's rulers, interpreted by that much but falsely praised Gamaliel at whose feet he had sat. Gamaliel had said, " Let them alone ; for if their plan and operations are of men they will come to naught, but if they are from God ye cannot overthrow them." ² And to him, it is said, the Sanhedrim agreed. Trimmer, compromiser, coward, was he. It is not true that whatever is of God flourishes when men are disloyal. And it is not true that whatever is not of God comes suddenly to naught if men who ought to fight it dare not.

Paul set himself to extirpate this false religion, nurtured in the very heart of Israel. He persecuted its adherents ; became exceedingly mad against them ; went from house to house in search of their conventicles ; spared neither men nor women ; presided at many a cruel scourging ; added jeer and insult to the penalties inflicted ; endeavored in vain to induce disciples of the new faith to renounce their Lord ; sent more than one to share with Stephen the martyr's coronation.³ Their effectual non-resistance intensified his passion. The time-

¹ Acts viii. 4.

² Acts v. 34-39.

³ Acts viii. 3 ; ix. 1 ; xxii. 4 ; xxvi. 9-11 ; Gal. i. 13 ; 1 Tim. i. 13.

serving priests and Pharisees grew weary of his intensity. Time-servers and place-holders always do weary of earnest men. They could not understand the spirit of a Paul, who was determined to put down falsehood at every hazard. So when he came to the high priest, and asked for a firman to the Jewish authorities at Damascus, that he might bring to Jerusalem for trial there any whom he might find belonging to this Christian sect, the high priest was very glad to get rid of him, and gave the desired authority.

And yet during all this time Paul had not himself been at peace. The audacity of Stephen was of the kind to appeal to his own native audacity. The boldness of a man who dared face a mob was of the kind that he admired. The clear-sighted courage of an opponent who understood the issues commended him to Paul more than the cowardice of time-servers who professed Paul's faith. Moreover, the teaching of Stephen and of others began to produce an impression upon Paul. He began to question whether he wholly comprehended Jewish history and Jewish character. The more his mind misgave him the more vehement became his passion against the Christians; the more vehement that passion the more his mind misgave him. Something such was the condition of Paul when he started for Damascus. It was a six days' journey. He was practically alone. His attendants were not theologians, probably not very pious men. They could not discuss old traditions and new faiths with

him. He was left to himself, and he found himself a very uncomfortable companion. The kindliness in his heart was always great, and there marched in the way before him the shadowy forms of those whom he had put to death. He was always courageous, and the boldness of the men who stood for their own convictions unto death stirred him with a new, strange pain. The problem of his own life came up again before him, and he remembered that though he had been blameless in the law, he had never had that peace which the Psalmist and the prophets promised to the man who has the blessing of the Almighty. So he studied and wondered and thought, and fought himself, as before he had fought others. For the man who is strong in his own conviction is rarely angered by opposition. It is the man who only half believes who is roiled and irritated by questioning; irritated because he fears the questioning will rob him of his faith. To-day in America it is not the men who believe in spiritual religion with their whole nature who are angry because their theology is questioned, but the men who are half afraid their theology is false, and therefore cannot endure to have it put on trial. So was it with Paul.

Five days had passed. He was already approaching his journey's end, when, at midday, there suddenly shone a light from the heavens so dazzling that he and his retinue fell to the ground, and a voice cried out to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He answered, still with his native

independence unbroken, "Sire, who art thou?" The answer, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," was enforced by a vision of the Risen One whom Stephen had seen standing on the right hand of God; at the same time the Voice discloses to him the conflict which had been going on in his own soul, a secret from all others, scarcely even recognized by himself: "It is hard for thee to kick against the goads."¹ This reading of his heart's secret is more convincing than either Voice or Vision. He surrenders instantly. "Sire," he replies, "what wilt thou have me to do?"² The surrender was required to be complete. "Go on to Damascus, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do." From one of the despised Christians he was to get his instructions. Such is the thorough work God makes with a soul, and such the thorough work a true soul makes with itself. When Paul surrendered he surrendered absolutely and entirely.³

I do not propose to discuss here the phenomena that attended Paul's conversion. Similar phenomena have been recorded from time to time by men in whom sudden changes have been wrought.

¹ The figure is interpreted by Eccles. xii. 11: "The words of the wise are as goads." His uneasy conscience was the goad, whose prickings he would not follow.

² The word *Kurie*, rendered *Lord*, is not necessarily a recognition of divine authority. It is a general title expressive of respect, and is sometimes translated "Sir," as in John xii. 21; xx. 15; Acts xvi. 30. But its use by Paul here indicates reverence for the one whom he had formerly despised.

³ There are three accounts of this event in the Book of Acts: ch. ix. 1-9; xxii. 3-11; xxvi. 9-18.

Constantine thought he saw a cross in the sky. Loyola thought he saw hosts of good and evil set in battle array against each other. Luther thought he saw the devil coming to tempt him, and flung the inkstand at him. Were these real visions? I know no reason why we should think they were not.¹ Why should we think the celestial sphere may not be all about us, and sometimes, in some sudden and illuminating moment, pierce through the mystic cloud which generally hides it from our vision?

It is true that only Paul saw the Vision, and apparently only Paul heard and understood the Voice.² It is also true that he afterwards speaks of the Christ who was revealed *in* him.³ But it is also true that he was blinded by the light and ever after carried about with him, in some physical effect upon his person, what he calls the marks of the Lord Jesus.⁴ How far the Voice and Vision were external, how far wrought within, it is perhaps impossible to determine. But it is also of very little consequence. How far the Vision was produced by a phenomenon in the heavens, how far by a phenomenon in the brain, it is not important, and perhaps not possible, to determine. Paul was instantly arrested, and his whole life was revo-

¹ The fact that Paul was stricken with blindness shows that the phenomenon was partially at least objective.

² Comp. Acts ix. 7 with Acts xxii. 9, where the phrase "heard not the voice" is to be interpreted as "did not recognize any articulate words."

³ Gal. i. 16.

⁴ Gal. vi. 17.

lutionized; that is the important fact, and that is not questioned.¹ Professor Jowett, of Balliol College, Oxford, will be recognized by every one as both a great and a thoroughly independent scholar. And this is what he says on the subject:—

“There is no fact in history more certain or undisputed than that, in some way or another, by an inward vision or revelation of the Lord, or by an outward miraculous appearance, as he was going to Damascus, the Apostle was suddenly converted from being a persecutor to a preacher of the gospel.”²

Paul began at once to preach in the synagogues in Damascus that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah.³ The synagogue service made it possible for hearers to ask questions. To such questioning Paul was subjected. How could he reconcile the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah with historic precedent and the Mosaic law? Paul was not one to hold inconsistent opinions in different hemispheres of his brain. He was not one who could hold certain opinions apart from and inconsistent with other opinions. He felt that he must study. What place so good for study as the foot of Mount

¹ Paul's letters abound with references to this conversion; *e. g.* Rom. vii. 24, 25; 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9; Gal. i. 15, 16; Ephes. ii. 3-6; Phil. iii. 4-8, etc.

² Jowett's *Com.* p. 227.

³ “Immediately preached in the synagogues, Jesus, that he is the Son of God.” Acts ix. 20. This is the unquestionable reading. See Alford, Westcott and Hort, and Rev. Version. His preaching was not at this time the theological doctrine that the Messiah is divine, but the fact that Jesus was the Messiah.

Sinai, whither Moses had gone to receive the law, whither Elijah had retreated, and where he had seen the fire and earthquake and tempest, and had listened to the still small voice? Paul turned his back on Damascus, and retreated for we know not how long—two or three years—to Arabia. There he restudied the prophecies, reëxamined the law, recreated his philosophy. There, too, he settled, perhaps not without conflict, his life purpose.¹ If he attached himself to this Christian sect, he must give up all that most men hold dear,—his ambitions, his friendships, his family ties, everything. He has not told the story of the inward struggle, but he has told us of the result:—

“If any other one thinks to have confidence in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew parents, measured by the law, a Pharisee, measured by zeal, persecuting the Church, measured by the standards of righteousness afforded by the law, blameless. But whatsoever things were advantages to me, these have I reckoned to be but loss. Yea, verily, I do moreover continually reckon all things to be loss because of the supereminence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, through whom I suffered the loss of all things and reckoned them but refuse, in order that I might gain Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, that which proceeds from the law, but that

¹ His subsequent history negatives any notion that he went into Arabia to preach. It was not until fourteen years later that he accepted fully and entered upon his mission to the Gentiles. See Chronological Table on p. xi.

which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which proceeds from God and is founded upon faith; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed unto his death, if possibly I might attain to the resurrection from the dead; not that I have already attained Christ, or am already perfected, but I press on if also I may lay hold on that for which I was laid hold of by Christ.”¹

From this retreat Paul came out to enter on his missionary career, bringing with him some of his old Jewish prejudices, bringing also the Levitical forms of speech in which he had been educated. It often happens that a man retains the forms of utterance of his early education when the spirit within him has been entirely revolutionized. Thus Paul still used rabbinical phraseology, still cast much of his thought in rabbinical forms, and still entertained to some extent the rabbinical conceptions of the Messianic kingdom. He did not at first understand his mission as the Apostle to the Gentiles, or, if he did, he did not enter upon that mission. Eight or ten years appear to have passed away between the time of his return from Arabia and the first true missionary journey of which we have any record in the Book of Acts.²

He began preaching in Damascus. But persecution soon arose against him there. He came

¹ Phil. iii. 4-12.

² Probably more rather than less. Lightfoot makes the period eleven years, *Biblical Essays*, p. 221.

See Chronological Table on p. xi.

near paying the penalty of his bravery with his life. Damascus was a city surrounded by walls. On these walls were houses with windows looking out upon the country beyond. In one of these houses, as a good Providence had ordered it, lived a Christian, and Paul was let down out of the window of one of these houses, beyond the wall, and so escaped from the guards who were watching the gates to apprehend him.¹ Thence he went up to Jerusalem. But he was driven out of Jerusalem also;² if he had stayed there, he would have followed Stephen to a martyrdom sooner than he did. Thence he went up to Tarsus, his native city. Some time elapsed; what occurred during this time we do not know. He next appears in Antioch, a pagan city, given over to philosophy, art, and pleasure.³ Here was a little church where the followers of Jesus had been gathered, some of them originally pagans, some of them Jews. Satire was a prevailing form of humor and a common substitute for argument in those days, and this sect that thought they were going to revolutionize the world and bring in the Messianic kingdom were satirically called Christians,—that is, Messianists.⁴

¹ Acts ix. 24, 25.

² Acts ix. 29. Comp. xxii. 21.

³ Acts xiii. 1, 2.

⁴ The word "Christian" occurs in the N. T. only three times; Acts xi. 26; xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16. Its satirical use by Agrippa, and Peter's use of it, as well as the reputation of Antioch for coining derisive epithets, combine to support the interpretation here given of the origin of the term.

This little church said to Paul, or Paul said to the little church, or God said to both and they both heard and listened, Send Paul and Barnabas on a mission to the heathen. It was the first foreign missionary effort. All the arguments that have ever been made against missionary effort since were tenfold stronger then. But they did not avail against the spiritual enthusiasm of this church. Paul received his ordination to missionary service at a prayer-meeting without a single Apostle there to give him the benediction ; it is doubtful whether a single Apostle in the Christian Church would have given him a benediction had he been there. And so he started forth to convert the world before the Messiah should come again.

CHAPTER III

PAUL THE MISSIONARY

IT is not within the province of this volume to trace chronologically the history of Paul's missionary travels. Only in brief outline can I indicate some of the general features and characteristics of the fifteen years of life of which we have any record in the New Testament. It ends with Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. Tradition reports further missionary journeys, and his final death as a martyr by the headsman's axe under Nero, in the sixtieth year of his age, A. D. 67 or 68.

In these missionary journeys he preached wherever he could. Generally, whenever he went into a town or city, he first looked up his Jewish brethren.¹ In some of the larger cities there was a Jewish synagogue. He was a Jewish rabbi, recognized as such, — probably wore some insignia which served to designate him as a rabbi, so that when he was seen in the synagogue he was invited to the platform to address the congregation. If he was refused a hearing in the synagogue, or was in a city in which there was none, he would preach in the market-place. Every Greek and Roman city

¹ Acts xiii. 14; xiv. 1; xvi. 13; xvii. 1, 2.

had a market-place, where ideas as well as goods were interchanged with great freedom. Here Paul often talked with people in groups, as he could find them. Sometimes he took a private house of his own, but oftener found his way into the private house of some one who was already of his way of belief, and there talked to the people gathered to hear him. On one occasion he hired a Greek schoolhouse which had probably been abandoned by its teacher.¹ He did not confine himself, however, to preaching; indeed, the preaching was the lesser part of his work. He did a great deal of what we call personal work. He went from house to house. He talked with people singly or by twos and threes. He had no Anglo-Saxon dread of enthusiasm; was not afraid of emotion; talked to men, oftentimes with tears in his eyes. For he was on fire with a passionate fervor, and he urged his disciples also to be fervid.²

When he preached to the Jews, he followed very much the line of argument which Stephen had followed. It is interesting to compare Stephen's speech, delivered at the time of his martyrdom, and the first sermon preached by Paul in a synagogue.³ They run along the same lines. Paul begins as Stephen began, with the history of Israel; he shows how Israel had been expectant of a Messiah, and yet how it had been characterized by unbelief

¹ Acts xiv. 8-18; xvii. 17; xviii. 7; xix. 9; xx. 7-12.

² Acts xx. 18-20; Phil. iii. 18; Rom. xii. 11.

³ Acts vii. with xiii. 15-41.

and in all its history had been disobedient to God and recalcitrant; breaks off the history before it is completed; states that the Messiah was born of the seed of David, as promised; that Israel has put him to death; and then bears testimony as a living, personal witness that this Jesus has risen from the dead. This appears to have been his habitual course of argument with the Jews in his earlier ministry. He bases his whole argument for Christianity on the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, attested not by others, but by his own personal vision of and personal communion with him as a living Messiah.¹

When he preaches to the pagans, though he ends with the same prophecy of an approaching judgment, he pursues a different course. He does not refer to the Bible; says little about the Messiah; speaks of Jesus, indeed, but of Jesus as one coming to fulfill the hopes and expectations to which pagan poets have given expression. The most notable of his reported sermons to the pagans is one delivered in Athens. Athens was the home of Greek philosophy and the centre of Greek worship. Petronius says that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens; Pausanias, that there were more images in Athens than in all the rest of Greece combined; and Xenophon that the whole city was an altar, a votive offering to the gods.² It could not have

¹ Acts xiii. 30-37; xvii. 2, 3, 30, 31; 1 Cor. xv. 3-8.

² Pausanias writes about a century after Paul's visit, but his description is doubtless applicable to the Athens of Paul's time.

been long after Paul's visit to Athens that the same Council of the Areopagus, which, on his visit, summoned him to give account of his heralding of "strange gods," erected a statue to Nero, and inscribed upon the Parthenon the legend "The Council of the Areopagus, and the Council of the Six Hundred, and the Athenian People [to] Emperor Greatest Nero Cæsar Claudius, Augustus, Germanicus, Son of God."¹ To a city with such notions of deity and thus pervaded by idolatry and its attendant priestcraft, comes Paul, and his heart is stirred within him by the ignorance and the superstition which surround him. He talks as he has opportunity in the market-place. People listen. Crowds begin to gather about him. At length the university takes the matter up.² There was a council of the university which had authority to regulate religious teaching in Athens; and this council summons Paul to give account of himself. He is not, indeed, put on trial; he is not charged with any crime; but the question is raised, What right has he to teach? he is no scholar, no graduate from any Greek school, and he knows very little of Greek philosophy. The people compare him to a little bird that picks up a crumb here and a crumb there; a petty plagiarizer, they call him.³

¹ See *Century Magazine*, June, 1897, pp. 301-309.

² For the grounds of this interpretation of the trial, see Dr. Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 241-249.

³ Acts xvii. 18. "Babbler" is literally "seed-picker." It is a word of Athenian slang, applied to a quack teacher who retailed

Others, more seriously, charge him with being a setter-forth of strange gods, — a crime for which Socrates had died four hundred years before. The council lay hold upon him and lead him up to the great platform where the tribunals are wont to be held, and, surrounding him in a circle and standing him in the midst, they ask him to give account of himself and state what his doctrines are, that they may consider whether he shall have license to go on any longer in this university town. And this is his answer : —

“Ye men of Athens, in every point of view I see you more than others reverential to the gods. For, passing through your city and looking about upon the objects of your worship, I found here even one altar on which was inscribed ‘To an unknown God.’ Whom, therefore, without knowing him ye worship, him declare I unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein ; he that is lord of heaven and earth, in no handmade temple dwells, neither by human hands is served, as though he needed aught — he who himself gives life and breath and all things, and has made of one blood all the nations of the earth that they may dwell together, and has fixed the appointed seasons and limits of their abode ; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being ; as certain also of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also his

scraps of learning which he picked up at haphazard and repeated. Dean Farrar renders it “picker-up of learning’s crumbs.” See Ramsay’s *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 242, 243.

offspring.' Inasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God overlooked; but he now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained, giving assurance unto all in that he hath raised him from the dead."¹

It has often been noticed with what characteristic skill Paul approaches this council, how he commends their reverence for the gods, quotes their own poets, and leads them toward that to which he would direct them, the revelation in Jesus Christ of the God whom, though unknown, they worship. But when he speaks of the resurrection of the dead, they will hear him no more; and so he goes his way. This sermon may be taken as a type of Paul's spirit in dealing with the pagan world, as the other may be taken as a type of Paul's method of dealing with the Jewish world. With this message, the same in its outcome, though so different in its approach, he travels from city to city and province to province.

In this missionary work he has some great advantages.

The world is practically one, and under one government. He can travel where he pleases. There are no boundaries that he dare not pass over. The time has gone when a man is regarded as a foe if he passes out of his own country into another, for

¹ Acts xvii. 22-31.

all the countries in which Paul traveled are parts of the one great Roman Empire.

And Paul himself is a Roman citizen. His father and his mother were Jews, but they had become Roman citizens. How we do not know. Perhaps they had paid a great price for it. More probably they had been captured in war, and thus became Roman slaves, and then for some service rendered had been manumitted.¹ And when the Roman slave became a freeman, he became a Roman free-man. So, while Paul was born and raised religiously a Jew, his citizenship was Roman; as the children of a Russian Jew who has come to this country and here been naturalized, are American-born citizens, though of Jewish parentage. Of this fact Paul more than once takes advantage.² But this is not the most significant effect of his Roman citizenship upon him. It makes him cosmopolitan. He realizes himself as belonging to the world. He has a certain pride in his Roman citizenship, and this Roman citizenship and the pride which it brings with it has enlarged his horizon and made him a greater man than he could have been simply as a Hebrew. He refers to Roman citizenship more than once in his epistles, and to the privileges which

¹ Paul's frequent references to slavery (Rom. i. 1; vi. 16, 20) and his evident sympathy with slaves (Ephes. vi. 5, 8; Col. iii. 22-25; Philem. 12, 16) indicate his intimate familiarity with the conditions of servitude.

² Acts xvi. 37; xxii. 25. Comp. xxiii. 27; xxv. 11, 16. Because he was a Roman citizen he was beheaded, not crucified.

it confers, as illustrations of citizenship in the kingdom of God.¹

Moreover, the language of the world — that is, the language of the cultivated world — was one. There were many dialects, and the common people were far apart from one another linguistically, but the people of culture spoke the Greek language throughout the Roman Empire, much as fifty years ago the people of culture in Europe spoke the French. And Paul spoke Greek like a Greek, not like a Hebrew. He was born in a Greek city, was brought up with Greek surroundings, and had the apparent culture of a Greek. When the mob set upon him in Jerusalem, and he was rescued by the soldiery, and turned to the officer and asked, May I speak to them? the officer was surprised, and replied, Canst thou speak Greek?² The moment he spoke in Greek the officer paid respect to him. He said to himself, This is a different man from what I had thought; he is a man of culture. The ability to speak the Greek language as a Greek marked its possessor as belonging to the upper class.

It is probable that he was by no means a poor man. It is true that he was a tentmaker; that at times he labored with his own hands; true that he says nothing himself about his possessions. But the indications are unmistakable that he was a man of some competence. A man could not now,

¹ Phil. iii. 20, Rev. Ver. ; Ephes. ii. 19. See Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays*, pp. 203, 204.

² Acts xxi. 37.

and could not then, travel throughout Greece and Rome without money. He traveled in good fashion. When he went up to Rome, he took two companions with him as his slaves.¹ He appealed to Cæsar. It was an expensive proceeding to appeal to Cæsar.² Paul took the appeal without any hesitation, — Paul, who had said again and again, I will not be a burden to the Church, and will not take charity from them. Paul was not a man to take an appeal to Cæsar and then ask the churches to pay the bills. Paul was put in prison, and Felix held him there because he expected a bribe. Felix did not expect a bribe from poor men. This Paul was no unkempt, ragged, poverty-stricken wanderer. He was a Greek gentleman of culture, a Roman citizen of dignity, a gentleman of adequate means for leisurely and measurably comfortable travel.³

¹ For evidence of this, see Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, p. 316.

² "An appeal to the Supreme Court could not be made by everybody that chose. Such an appeal had to be permitted and sent forward by the provincial governor; and only a serious case would be entertained. But the case of a very poor man is never esteemed as serious, and there is little doubt that the citizen's right of appeal to the Emperor was hedged in by fees and pledges." Ramsay thinks that the object of Paul's appeal was to receive an imperial judgment in favor of religious liberty. "Paul had weighed the cost; he had reckoned the gain which would accrue to the Church if the Supreme Court pronounced in his favor; and his past experience gave him every reason to hope for a favorable issue before a purely Roman tribunal, where Jewish influence would have little or no power." — Ramsay: *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, pp. 310-312.

³ The fact that he worked at times with his own hands to add to

At the beginning of his career the spirit of Rome was a spirit, not of toleration, but of that indifference which at times serves almost as good a purpose. Rome did not care for the conflicts of religions. There were a number of deities and a number of religions, and it was the early policy of Rome to allow every people to have their own religion and their own gods. When the Jews brought complaint against Paul that he was interfering with their religion, and brought him before Gallio in Corinth, Gallio said, If it were a question of misdemeanor or crime, reason would that I should bear with you ; but if it is a question of words and of names and of *your* law, ye yourselves will look to it ; for I have no mind to be a judge of such matters ; and he drove them from the judgment seat.¹ In the Book of Acts Paul is never accused merely of being a Christian. That is not the charge against him. He is accused of being seditious, of turning the world upside down, of inciting men to violence, of interfering with trade.² If it had been sufficient simply to say that he was a Christian, these false charges would not have been invented. It was not

his income (Acts xviii. 3 ; xx. 34 ; 1 Cor. iv. 12 ; 1 Thess. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8) is not inconsistent with the belief that he was not wholly dependent on such labor ; and he habitually refused to depend on the churches. 1 Cor. ix. 12 ; 2 Cor. xi. 9 ; Phil. iv. 17.

¹ Acts xviii. 12-17.

² Acts xvi. 20, 21 ; xvii. 6, 7 ; xix. 26, 27, 37, 38 ; xxiv. 5, 6. Ramsay in *The Church in the Roman Empire* has given a very clear account of the gradual rise of persecutions against the Christians as Christians.

until toward the latter part of Paul's historical career that in Rome Christians were persecuted simply because they were Christians. The indications are that this form of persecution was first instituted by Nero, to deflect the growing indignation against himself because of the burning of Rome. His decree, once issued, remained a part of the imperial policy, sometimes enforced, sometimes unenforced, until well on to the time of Constantine. But not until Paul's first imprisonment in Rome had that decree gone forth.

Nor was there at first any very strong religious opposition to Paul on the part of the pagan peoples. The people cared very little about their religion. The philosophers had long since abandoned it. The wits made fun of it. The gods were ridiculed by the comedians. And the people were tired of it. It was maintained by the priesthood, and for their own benefit.¹ When there appeared a man saying, Here is a new faith, the people were ready to listen. The sinew of the old faith had relaxed ; the arms of the old religion were paralyzed ; the old religion was decrepit.

Add to this that the appeal of Paul was, in the main, to the poorer classes. His congregations were made up, he tells us himself, not of the rich or the strong or the wise or the noble, but of the

¹ The attitude of Rome toward the old religion is well epitomized by Gibbon in his famous sentence, "The various forms of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were considered by the people as equally true ; by the philosophers as equally false ; and by the magistrates as equally useful."

poor and the outcast.¹ The religion he taught addressed itself to the freedmen, to slaves, to the outcast of society. Its message to them was, You yourselves are sons of God. Peasants, I bring you a Messiah who was himself a peasant. Carpenters, I bring you a man who was the son of a carpenter. He is the world's deliverer ; the rescuer of mankind ; he brings in a new reign and a new life into the world, in which you are to share.

With this message was another like it: Death does not end all ; there is a life beyond ; and we know that there is such a life because we know the man who was dead and lived again. The power of Christianity inspired by this faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ it is hard for us now to realize. Eighteen centuries have intervened between ourselves and the living witnesses of the resurrection. But then they were living.

And yet there were difficulties which Paul had to encounter, and many of them. It was not plain or easy work. He has given us in one graphic picture, in very few words, his experience : —

“ At the hands of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one ; thrice was I beaten with rods ; once was I stoned ; thrice I suffered shipwreck ; a day and a night have I spent in the deep. In journeyings oftentimes ; in perils of rivers ; in perils of brigands ; in perils from my kindred ; in perils from the Gentiles ; in perils in the city ; in perils in the desert ; in perils on the sea ; in perils among false brethren ; in toil and weariness ; in

¹ 1 Cor. i. 26-28.

sleeplessness ; in hunger and thirst ; in fastings oftentimes ; in cold and nakedness ; not to mention that which is added to these, and which presses upon me day by day, the care of all the churches.”¹

Financial interests were interfered with, and took umbrage at the interference. Christianity has always had to contend more or less against what men call vested interests. This has been true ever since its birth. Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, written about the year 112, complacently commends the success of his persecution of the Christians, because as a result there had been a great increase in the demand for fodder for the cattle raised for sacrifice.² There is something humorous in this naïve balancing of Christianity on the one side and the sale of fodder for cattle on the other, and this estimate of Christianity, in the view of so thoughtful a Roman as Pliny, as the lighter weight of the two. This antagonism of moneyed interest was a prime factor in the opposition which Paul had to encounter. It was because the masters of the poor insane girl saw that their gain was gone when the devil was cast out of her that Paul was arrested and beaten at Philippi. It was because the sales of the images of Diana were interfered with that Paul's companions were mobbed at Ephesus.³

Financial interests were perhaps less venomous than race prejudice. The hostility between Jew

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 24-28.

² See Ramsay's *The Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 196-201.

³ Acts xvi. 19 ; xix. 24-28.

and Gentile was great. The anti-Semitic prejudice of our own time affords but a mild illustration of the anti-Gentile prejudice in the time of Paul among the Jews. When he said to the Jews, The Greeks also are God's children and are sharers of his love and have an inheritance in his kingdom, they rose in wrath against him.¹ Even the Christian Church yielded him but a scant and half-hearted support. One faction in it was always bitterly opposed to him, the more bitterly because its opposition was conscientious. This opposition was intensified and strengthened by the conservative element in the Church, which thought that Paul had gone quite too far when he disregarded the whole ceremonial law, and, without claiming any special divine authority, discarded that rite of circumcision which had come down to them with the sanction of Mosaic enactment and of centuries of practice.² Whether pagans could become Christians at all unless they first became Jews was seriously doubted. A great council was held in Jerusalem to consider this question. A quasi-liberality finally triumphed in this council, and it expressed the judgment that pagans might become Christians provided they abstained from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.³ The

¹ Acts xiii. 47-50; xiv. 4, 5; xvii. 5.

² Acts xv. 1; Gal. ii. 3, 4.

³ Acts xv. 23-29. This was not a church council in the ecclesiastical sense of that term. The churches of Palestine were not represented. It was simply a meeting of the church at Jerusalem to answer the questions brought to them by Paul and Barnabas

resolutions were given to Paul and Barnabas to carry to the Gentile churches. Paul took them, but very soon quietly set aside three of these prohibitions. An idol, he told his disciples, is nothing in the world, and meat offered to an idol is just as good to eat as any other meat; but, if it disturbs the conscience of these weaker brethren, — so with gentle satire he characterized the Apostles at Jerusalem, — forbear from eating for love's sake.¹

In all this career, with the difficulties and the dangers which he had to confront, the characteristics of Paul stand out luminous in the fragmentary sketches which history furnishes us of his career and character. He had passion and intensity, but great self-poise; versatility, but steadiness; scholarly tastes, but great presence of mind in sudden emergencies. He was equally at home before the university in Athens, before a Jewish audience in a great synagogue, before a group of pious women by the riverside, and before Festus or Felix in a semi-royal court. He captivated men by his personal magnetism; arrested them by his quiet calmness in times of peril. In Jerusalem he is about to be scourged under orders of the chief captain. As they are binding him, Paul quietly asks the centurion, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman

whether the present representatives of that church really represented them in saying: Except ye be circumcised ye cannot be saved. Acts xvi. 1-3. Paul declares explicitly that he would not have submitted his judgment on the main question to any one, whatever authority he might claim. Gal. i. 8, 9; ii. 11-14.

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 4, 7-12.

uncondemned?" and the centurion, alarmed for his own safety, goes straightway to report to the chief captain.¹ Forty Jews have taken a vow that they will eat nothing and drink nothing until they have killed Paul. His nephew learns that they are lying in wait, gets access to the captive in the castle, and reports the news to him. Paul calls the guard and says, "Take this young man unto the chief captain, for he has a certain thing to tell him."² The guard is increased, and Paul is brought safely to his destination. I suspect the Jews broke their vows and did eat something, though Paul was not killed.

These qualities of courage, of poise, of magnetism, of versatility, receive perhaps their most dramatic illustration in the story of his shipwreck. He is put on board ship as a prisoner. He carries his two companions with him as body-servants. He is at once made friends of by the centurion, who takes him into his counsel when they debate whether they shall sail from a given port or not. The centurion, who is the commander of this government ship, decides that they shall set sail in spite of Paul, for the captain of the ship counsels it. The storm comes on; they are in bitter stress of weather; all hope is gone; they are in utter despair. Then it is that this little, bent, half-blinded Jew goes about among the frightened sailors and soldiers and says, Be of good cheer; my God has given me a vision, and sent me a message; we shall all be saved.

¹ Acts xxii. 25-29.

² Acts xxiii. 17.

When some sailors under pretense of carrying anchors out of the bow let down a small boat into the sea, that they may get into it and escape, it is Paul who detects the cowardly fraud and calls the attention of the centurion and the soldiers to the deserters, and with a sharp cut of the sword the rope is severed and the boat drifts away into the night. It is Paul, too, who as day dawns makes his way about the slanting and slippery decks and distributes bread among the cowering groups, famished and frightened, and calmly asks the blessing of his God upon the meal, amid the roaring of the tempest.¹

This man is no lay figure on which philosophy hangs like clothes on a skeleton in a dry-goods window. He is a hero, a gentleman; Coleridge calls him the gentleman with the finest manners of any man upon record, — cultivated, refined, heroic, versatile, magnetic; a born interpreter of truth, a leader of men, a creator of life, an epoch-making genius.²

¹ Acts xxvii. Consult Mr. James Smith's admirable monograph on *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*.

² "The Paul of Acts is the Paul that appears to us in his own letters, in his ways and his thoughts, in his educated tone of polished courtesy, in his quick and vehement temper, in the extraordinary versatility and adaptability which made him at home in every society, moving at ease in all surroundings, and everywhere the centre of interest, whether he is the Socratic dialectician in the agora of Athens, or the rhetorician in its university, or conversing with kings and proconsuls, or advising in the council on shipboard, or cheering a broken-spirited crew to make one more effort for life. Wherever Paul is, no one has eyes for any but him." — Ram-

say's *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 21, 22. For illustrations of traits of character furnished by incidents in his life, see Acts xiii. 10; xiv. 15; xvi. 3, 25, 37; xvii. 16; xviii. 5, 9, 18; xix. 30; xx. 20-31; xxi. 37-40; xxiii. 17; xxiv. 10 ff., 25; xxv. 10, 11; xxvi. 2 ff., 29; xxvii. 10, 21 ff., 31, 33-36; xxviii. 3-5, 17 ff. They illustrate his passionate nature, strong emotions, self-poise, presence of mind, courage, tact, oratorical skill, quickness in repartee, versatility, consecration, devotion to his cause.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY CHURCH ¹

PAUL's letters were for the most part written to certain primitive churches. What was the character of these churches?

When we speak of a church, we think of a highly organized body, Presbyterian or Episcopal or Congregational or Roman Catholic, with a clearly defined ecclesiastical power vested somewhere, — in the congregation, or the session, or the wardens, or the priest; with officers elected to perform certain specified functions; with a creed, written or traditional, long or short; and with some order of ser-

¹ Authority for most of the statements in this chapter may be found in Dean Alford's *Greek Testament*, Dean Stanley's *Christian Institutions*, Dr. Hort's *The Christian Ecclesia*, Professor Hatch's *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, by the same author, Bishop Lightfoot's *The Christian Ministry*, and Professor A. V. G. Allen's *Christian Institutions*. These are all Episcopal scholars of acknowledged authority in the department of Church history. It may be fairly said that now substantially all scholars who treat ecclesiastical history as other history is treated by scientific scholars, that is, as a development, agree in the general view underlying the picture of the early churches presented in this paper. For the opposite view the student may be referred to *The Church and the Ministry*, by Canon Gore, and *Sacerdotalism*, by Canon Knox-Little.

vice or ritual, simple or complex. And when we read that Paul wrote letters to the churches, we imagine such organizations as now exist, — Congregational or Presbyterian or Episcopal or Papal.

But, in fact, there was no well-organized body of Christians whatever when Paul began his missionary tour, and certainly none during the earlier years of his missionary tour, when he wrote the first of his letters. The latest of his letters was written probably before A. D. 68, about which time his martyrdom took place,¹ and the church did not grow into any definite organization before the middle of the second century, probably not so early as that.

Christ formed no ecclesiastical organization. This is not equivalent to saying that he formed no church, — a question I do not consider; but he prescribed no rules for church government. Twice, and only twice, he referred to a church,² but in prophetic terms, as to something future; but how it was to be organized, what were to be its officers, and what its functions and its duties, he never said. He appointed no officers. Once, in Galilee, he sent twelve of his disciples to preach in the villages, while he preached in the cities. Once, in Perea, a larger district, with a more scattered and diverse population, he appointed seventy to go, two by two, on a similar itinerant mission. But the one organization was, so far as the gospel indicates, as tem-

¹ This is Bishop Lightfoot's date; some scholars would put it a little earlier.

² Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17.

porary as the other ; it was created for a particular purpose, and ceased to exist when that purpose had been served. Christ prescribed no creed, nor anything like a creed. He taught truths, but he never systematized or formulated truth. He prescribed no ritual, and nothing like a ritual. His disciples did, indeed, come to him once, saying, "Teach us, Lord, to pray ;" and he said, "After this manner pray : begin with reverence for your Father ; then ask him for what things you want. Are you hungry, ask him for bread ; are you perplexed, ask him for guidance ; are you tempted, ask him for deliverance ; have you sinned, ask him for forgiveness. Tell him what things you have need of. That is all ; that is prayer." We have converted this instruction into a liturgy ; and we have a right so to do. But it is our liturgy, not Christ's, though it is made out of Christ's general instructions. As he neither framed an organization, formulated a creed, nor established a ritual, so he appointed no officers. Whatever may be the meaning of the somewhat enigmatical declaration, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," the immediately succeeding history makes it clear that neither Peter nor the rest of the twelve thought that it gave him any supremacy, or appointed him to any permanent office, or conferred on him any power to appoint a successor.

When Christ died and rose again, his disciples were inspired by the resurrection with a new hope and a new faith. They did not at first lose their

Jewish conception of a Messiah who was to come in power and glory and set the world right. They had no conception of any necessity for organization, and accordingly they formed none. They loved Christ, expected him to come at any moment, and in this expectation met together in loving fellowship. They had, of course, no church buildings. They generally met in private houses. Sometimes they would get a hall or a schoolhouse; or perhaps a whole Jewish synagogue would become practically converted to Christianity, and the synagogue building would become a Christian church. As persecution came on, they carried on their worship in secret places. Thus in time the Catacombs became to them a kind of solemn cathedral. They had no ritual. Their meetings were much more like modern prayer-meetings than like modern church services. They sang together, sometimes the Hebrew psalms; sometimes some prophet would write a Christian psalm or adapt a Hebrew psalm to Christian use. They instructed one another. Any one might speak; any one might preach. There was no ordination; there were no officers.¹

These early Christians had no creed. They had no membership; there was no organization to belong to. When a man was converted, he was baptized, not as a condition of joining the church, but as a sign of his profession of faith in Christ. When a Roman jailer at Philippi was baptized, he was

¹ Acts ii. 42, 46, 47; iv. 23-31; xx. 7, 8; Ephes. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.

not admitted to a church. There was no church at Philippi to which he could be admitted. He was baptized as a solemn and sacred way of declaring his faith in the Messiah.¹ This baptism at first and for many years was only of adults; at a later period came in the baptism of infant children.² Baptism was generally by immersion, but it is by no means clear that it was ever by submersion. The earliest picture we have of baptism is one upon the walls of the Catacombs, in which John the Baptist and Jesus are represented as standing up to their waists in the river Jordan, while John pours water on the head of Jesus.³ It is not at all improbable that the earliest form of baptism was one which has now utterly gone out of use in our churches, — a method of immersion coupled with pouring. Certainly sprinkling was in the Apostolic Church unknown.

The Greeks had their voluntary associations, which were sometimes charitable, sometimes religious, sometimes social. They were a festive people, and these gatherings were generally accompanied with a meal. The Hebrews were also a festive people. Their religious forms and ceremonies were accompanied to a remarkable degree with eating. They believed in it as a means of unloosening the tongue and uniting people in good fellowship, and

¹ Acts xvi. 30-33; comp. Acts viii. 36-38; x. 47, 48.

² See Dean Stanley's *Christian Institutions*, chap. i.

³ See Smith's *Dict. of Christian Antiquities*, art. "Baptism;" Lundy's *Monumental Christianity*, pp. 62, 63, 385-387.

in this they were wise. So these early Christians, meeting together in private homes, and expecting the coming of the Messiah straightway to set the world right, not only sang hymns, repeated together extracts from the Hebrew psalms, and administered baptism as a sign and token of faith in Christ, but sat down to a common table together. And when they did thus break bread together, they remembered that night when Jesus Christ sat with the twelve, and brake bread with them, and passed them the bread and the wine. But as yet this simple social supper had not become a sacrament. It was not administered by a priest or a minister. No one was appointed for that purpose. Even as late as the latter half of the second century Tertullian claims that the laity are priests, and when there are no clergy present may perform all the priestly functions.¹ He was more radical than most ministers would venture to be in our time.

Any one could administer baptism. Paul himself was baptized by a layman.² Any one could preach, and every disciple did.³ The only ordination was that well summed up in the Book of Revelation, "Whosoever heareth, let him say, Come."⁴ When the disciples were scattered, they went everywhere preaching their simple doctrine. It does not

¹ Allen's *Christian Institutions*, p. 126; comp. 82; comp. Hatch on *Organ. of Early Chs.* p. 124; Dean Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, p. 46.

² Acts ix. 17.

³ Acts vi. 5, 9, 10; viii. 4.

⁴ Rev. xxii. 17.

follow that this pattern is to be followed by us now. Preaching has changed its character. There are reasons why men should be especially educated as preachers. There are reasons why the Lord's supper should generally be administered by persons appointed for the purpose. But in the primitive churches the story that the Messiah has come, that he has risen from the dead, that he will return soon, that he will set the world right — any one could tell. A theological education for such preaching was not required.

Thus gradually churches grew up. Wherever there were Christians, they met in some private house, talked with one another, sang hymns together, sat around a Christian festal board, and baptized those who accepted Christ as the Messiah. They required no ordination for preaching or for the administration of what we now call sacraments. Indeed, at first there was necessity for some pressure to be brought to bear upon these disciples to meet together. They hardly saw the necessity for it. They had no conception of the work that lay before them. So they were exhorted from time to time not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. But they were urged to do this, not because there was a great work to be done, but because the day of the Lord's coming was at hand.¹ When he came, it was well he should find his chosen ones in fellowship and communion.

Gradually, however, the necessity for organiza-

¹ Heb. x. 25.

tion impressed itself upon the disciples. The first pressure came from the distribution of charity. These early Christians were almost all of them poor, — freedmen, ex-slaves, half beggars. It is impossible for us to conceive the extent of the poverty in the Roman Empire. Those from whom the Church was chiefly recruited were the poorest of the poor. Now and then some rich man also accepted Christ as the Messiah. Those who were not quite so poor as the poorest contributed of their funds, and there began to be a distribution of goods. That is always a difficult thing. Done carelessly, it does more harm than good. It provoked the first controversy in the Christian Church. The Greeks said, "The Hebrews are getting more than their share." And the Hebrews answered them by saying, "We will elect a commission of seven, all of whom shall be Greeks, and they shall take the whole matter into their own hands." And so the first step toward an ecclesiastical organization was made.¹

There was also, as these assemblies for worship continued, a necessity for some one to supervise and direct the worshiping; to see that it was done in order; to prevent those from talking who had not anything to say, — quite an important function to be performed at times in religious as well as in secular gatherings. Thus there came to

¹ Acts vi. 1-6. The names of these deacons are all Greek, which indicates, though not conclusively, that they were Greeks, not Hebrews.

be an officer in the worshipping assembly who had oversight over the worship as well as over the charity. Still further oversight was required. It was a migratory period. Men traveled back and forth — not as much as they do now, but still in no small measure — and men came from distant communities, saying, “We are Christians ; help us.” Just as soon as there was money or food to be given, there were tramps ready to take it. Then, as now, it became necessary to have some one with courage and caution to see to it that the tramp was a worthy tramp, and the beggar a deserving beggar. Thus the local church adopted the method of giving letters to any one who had been accustomed to worship with it ; and when a man went away from home he took a letter from the overseer of his worshipping assembly, certifying that he belonged to the brotherhood at Ephesus or Rome, or wherever it might be. The officer who had the authority to grant these letters very soon got, through that, power to determine who should receive the letters and who should not.

Still further, after a little, the preaching ceased to be quite so simple as it was at first. Letters were written by various Apostles to different churches. Accounts were written of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. These were sent, first to one church and then to another ; and the churches exchanged these letters one with another. There was a great deal more of fraud and forgery in that time than in ours, and pious forgery and

pious fraud were not considered altogether illegitimate. Thus false letters and false histories were foisted upon the people. There were letters purporting to come from Paul and from Peter, which Paul and Peter had never seen.¹ It was necessary that some one should have charge of these records, and this person who had charge of the records would naturally exercise some judgment whether the records were right or wrong.

Thus, little by little, power grew in the hands of the overseer, or *episkopos*, as he was called, or bishop, as we call him now. At first he was the simple pastor, or overseer, or bishop, of a single church.² When the churches came into affiliation, he became the bishop of a group of churches in a town, and then of a larger district. Thus, gradually, the oversight of the churches grew up: first, out of the necessity for care in the administration of charity; next, out of the necessity for order in worship; next, out of the necessity for determining who were members of the nascent organizations; and, finally, out of the necessity for deter-

¹ Even in the apostle's lifetime. 2 Thess. ii. 2.

² Acts xx. 28. The word rendered overseers is *episkopoi*, elsewhere rendered bishops. It is generally conceded that *episkopos* or bishop and *presbuteros* or elder originally signified the same office. "That the *presbuteroi* (elders) did not differ from the *episkopoi* (bishops or overseers), is evident from the fact that the two words are used indiscriminately (Acts xx. 17, 28; Tit. i. 5, 7), and that the duty of presbyters is described by the term *episkopein*, to take oversight of the flock." Thayer's *Lexicon of the N. T.* They were forbidden by Peter to exercise lordship over the churches. 1 Pet. v. 3.

mining what were the legitimate documents and the real basis of religious instruction.

In the earlier period the organizations grew in different forms, according to different localities. Broadly speaking, they were three. For these Christians, not having any idea of permanent work or permanent organization, naturally took on the form of organization common in the community in which they happened to live. There were three forms of organization current in the first century, — the Jewish, the Greek, and the Roman. The Jewish organization was oligarchic. The elders, or older men, came by a sort of natural prescription to exercise authority in the village and in the synagogue. It came to them through their character, somewhat as chieftainship comes in the North American tribes. They were not elected; they were not appointed; they *grew* into their office. But, having taken their office, they ruled. They were the judges; had the power to discipline; controlled the services of the synagogue; were the governing body. Where a Christian church was made largely of Jews, it took on the Jewish organization. Then there were elders or *presbuteroi*, and these elders were themselves the governing body in the church.

Greece, on the other hand, was a democracy. It is true that it had at this time passed under monarchical control, but it is also true that it maintained its democratic spirit, and, wherever it could, something of its democratic institutions. Our town

meeting may almost be said to be borrowed from the early Greek democracies. Where Christians were mainly gathered out of a Greek community, they took on the Greek form of organization. Then the whole congregation gathered together; by a show of hands they elected their officers; and these officers exercised the same kind of authority and control which they were accustomed to exercise in the Greek associations.¹

In Rome the organization was monarchical; it was centralized. The government was administered on military principles; it was centred in one man in each city, one man in each province, and, finally, in one man over all, the Emperor, who was commander-in-chief of the empire. Where the church was made up of Romans, it took on the Roman form. Sometimes the man was elected; sometimes he put himself into office by his superior influence, his superior power, or his superior tact. But, however he secured the office, when he secured it, he was recognized, at first as the head of the local church; then, subsequently, when one of several churches grew into prominence or other churches were organized from it, he became the head of the group of churches. Thus for a time there were the three forms of organization, more or less differentiated, — the Jewish, or oligarchic; the Greek, or democratic; the Roman, or monarchical.

¹ Acts xiv. 23; 2 Cor. viii. 19. *Cheirotoneo*, translated in Acts *ordained*, in Corinthians *chosen*, in classic Greek signifies to elect by a show of hands.

When Paul began his preaching, this work of organization had not taken place. He was himself the instigator and inspirer of the life out of which the organization grew. He went from city to city and from province to province. At first, as soon as a few Christians were gathered together, he left them to tell to others the message he had told to them, and went on to the next city. And when those who had accepted the message gathered together, they framed their own organization according to their own ideas. As the founder of the little household of faith, Paul exerted a potent influence over them. When they elected officers, they asked his advice. When maladministration crept in, he demanded reform, and in no ambiguous terms. But in the main it may be said of Paul that he was a poet and a preacher rather than an organizer or administrator.

We are to conceive, then, of Paul as going from place to place, gathering a few people about him, inspiring them with his enthusiasm and his love for Christ, and, in the earlier part of his ministry, with his hope of Christ's immediate return and the immediate establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth. We are to conceive of him as visiting and living with these little bands, some of them converted Jews, more of them converted pagans, with no creed, no ritual, no order, nothing but a faith and an expectation. We are to conceive of him as getting word from time to time of difficulties which they had encountered, of dangers and

corruptions and false beliefs which had crept in among them, and then of his writing letters to them of counsel, of friendship, of encouragement, or of rebuke, as circumstances demanded.

These letters of Paul have been studied as theological treatises for many years; but they are not theological treatises. They are not in any proper sense of the term pastoral epistles or bishop's letters, written with the authority of an ecclesiastic to the church over which he has a right to exercise control. They are not literature and are not to be studied as literature. They were not written for literary purposes and have not literary form. They are letters of a friend written to friends. They are personal, affectionate, individual. The writer never thought that they would last eighteen centuries. He never thought that the Christian Church would last eighteen centuries. He never conceived for a moment that eighteen centuries would pass over the world before Christ would come again and set all things right. If he had, he would have written very different letters. They, perhaps, would have been more philosophical and less fragmentary, but they would not have tingled with life and been red with his own heart's blood.

CHAPTER V

THE LETTERS TO THE THESSALONIANS

ALMOST immediately after his conversion, Paul went to Arabia and began his study of the Old Testament prophets in order to reconcile his new view of the Messiah with the Scriptures; and as he re-read these Scriptures he got a new conception of the extent, and in some measure of the nature, of the Messiah's kingdom. He no longer believed that it would be for Israel only. He found in the Old Testament prophecies abundant evidence for the belief that the Messiah was to be a Saviour for other nations; that the Gentiles should come to his light, and the heathen to the brightness of his rising. One brief prophecy from the Book of Isaiah, the forty-ninth chapter, may serve as a type of promises which, studied with an open mind, would give him this conception:—

“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall

worship; because of the Lord that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.”¹

With this new conception of the breadth and largeness of the kingdom, he started upon his missionary tour to the Gentiles. But, although he had a new conception of the largeness of the kingdom which the Messiah was to initiate, there is no reason to think that he had a new conception of the nature of that kingdom or of the secret of its power and the method of its initiation. On the contrary, there is reason to think that he still entertained the old Jewish conception, so far as its nature and method of operation were concerned. What he believed, as we gather from his earlier writings and his sermons, was that the Jesus who had died and risen again would presently descend to the earth; that he would bring with him the celestial forces from heaven; that he would gather together Israel; that he would put himself at the head of this army, celestial and terrestrial; that he would conquer — utterly, absolutely, entirely, and forever; that he would extirpate the enemies of God, and would reign King over kings and Lord over lords. It is not unreasonable to think that he was confirmed in this opinion by the reports which came to him of the trial of Jesus. In one passage dealing with this subject he says that he speaks “by the word of the Lord.” This is very generally understood to mean

¹ Isaiah xlix. 6, 7. Paul refers to such prophecies in the O. T. of the ingathering of the Gentiles, in Acts xiii. 47; Rom. iv. 17, 18; ix. 25-29; x. 11, 14-20; xv. 9-12, 21.

by a revelation which had come to him from heaven. I do not think that is a correct interpretation. "The Lord," in Paul's use of the term, generally, if not always, means the Messiah. "The word of the Lord" means the teaching of this Messiah as it had been reported to him. How much he knew of the teaching of Jesus we cannot tell; but we do know that he had reported to him not only the fact of the crucifixion, but the details of that crucifixion; for he refers to these details with some specifness. We do know that he knew of the facts of the resurrection and some details respecting the resurrection. And it is reasonable to suppose that he knew the facts of the trial; that he knew that Jesus was arrested and put on trial for blasphemy; that the nature of this blasphemy with which Jesus was charged was his claim to be the son of the living God; that when this trial proceeded, no witnesses were found who could agree and whose testimony was adequate to justify a verdict of guilty even by a packed jury; that then the high priest, violating the Jewish law, called Jesus himself to the stand and administered the oath, adjuring him "by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Messiah, the son of God;" that Jesus replied, "I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."¹ It is not strange, then, that Paul, holding to his early belief of a kingdom that was to be inaugurated by celestial

¹ Matt. xxvi. 62-64; Mark xiv. 61, 62.

and supernatural force, felt that this belief was confirmed by the vision which had been afforded him of the risen Christ and by the report which had come to him of the words of Christ at the time of his trial. That Paul entertained any other view in the earlier part of his ministry there is no reason to think; that he did entertain this view there is abundant reason to think.

We have reports, as we have already seen, of two of his sermons, — one to the Jews in Antioch in Pisidia; one to the pagans on Mars Hill in Athens. They both reach by different routes the same conclusion. In the synagogue in Antioch Paul begins by praising the history of the Jewish people, breaks off in that history, narrates the birth, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, and brings his discourse to a conclusion with a picture of a judgment which this Christ will initiate at his coming. At Athens he does not begin with the Old Testament Scriptures, for his auditors knew nothing of them. He says nothing of prophecy, for his auditors knew nothing of prophecy. But, beginning with the revelation which God has made in nature, speaking of the spiritual ignorance in which men are living, as attested by their altar to an unknown God, he comes to the same conclusion that he did in the synagogue in Antioch: God will judge the world by that Man whom he hath ordained, and he has demonstrated this judgment because this Man has risen from the dead.¹

¹ Acts xiii. 16-41; xvii. 22-32.

Such, doubtless, was also his preaching at Thessalonica. It was one of the largest cities in ancient Greece. Salonica, the same city under a different name, is said to be the largest city in European Turkey, excepting only Constantinople. It is one of the few cities which have survived the decay that has fallen upon that unhappy empire of the olden time. It had and still has a noble harbor. It then was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. In this city there were a great number of Jews, as there still are. It has been throughout its history a Jewish centre. Paul began, as was his wont, preaching in the synagogue. He preached three Sabbaths; then his preaching in the synagogue came to an end. The Jews would hear him no longer, and he went out to preach to such as would hear him in the town. Where and how he found his preaching-places we do not know, nor how long he continued his preaching; but this was his message, — the message he had given in Antioch, the message he had given in a different form in Athens: "The Messiah has come; he has been put to death; he has risen from the dead; he is living; he will presently return with power and great glory; he will bring his angels with him, and he will judge the world; but he will not judge them by a race standard; he will judge them by standards of absolute righteousness; then all those who love God and look for his appearing will be gathered into his kingdom, and all those who oppose God and desire not his appearing will be destroyed

with everlasting destruction from the presence of this coming Messiah." He still thought that the power of this kingdom would lie in the power of an almighty King. He had yet to learn, what in our next chapter we shall see he did learn, that the secret of its power would be the love of a Father who suffers long and still is kind.

What aroused the particular excitement against him in the city we do not know. Envy, perhaps, by the Jews against this man who was opening the kingdom of God to the pagans; perhaps general religious hostility; perhaps, as at Ephesus, the interference of his preaching with what men are pleased to call vested rights. At all events, a mob was gathered together. In the outskirts of this city was a suburban population of peasants, superstitious, ignorant, an easy prey to demagogues. The word pagan means villager. The word heathen means heath-dweller. The villagers and the dwellers on the moors and uplands and away from the cities were for a long time repudiators and resisters of Christianity. They were the pagans and the heathen of the olden time. Some of these rural marketmen had come into the city selling their wares.¹ Among them a mob was aroused, which came to the house where Paul was staying, — the home of a kinsman of Paul's, Jason by name, who had taken him in and made him his guest. The mob demanded that Paul and Silas and Timothy

¹ See Acts xvii. 4-9, and my commentary thereon; Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, p. 226 ff.

should be given up. Jason would not give them up. He concealed them or contrived their escape. Then Jason himself was seized by the mob and brought before the rulers of the city. The complaint was made against Paul, Silas, and Timothy that they were proclaiming a new kingdom ; that they were heralds of some one coming to reign in the place of Cæsar ; that the old Roman imperialism would be swept away and a new kingdom put in its place. The charge was not without show of reason. Paul did declare a new kingdom : he did declare the overthrow of the present base Roman Empire and the establishment on its ruins of a new kingdom of the Lord. Then occurred just what happened more than once in the anti-slavery riots of our own country. It was the duty of the ruler of the city to preserve peace in the city. He said to himself, " We cannot have these disturbances here." It is generally supposed to be easier to stop one man from speaking than to stop a mob from opposing his speaking. In our own anti-slavery time it was not supposed that Isaiah Rynders and the mob disturbed the peace of New York ; it was Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison and Henry Ward Beecher. It was not the man who led the mob, it was the man who made the speeches. So the attempt was made, not to quell the mob, but to silence the speakers. And this was the method adopted in Thessalonica. The city magistrate took bonds of Jason that there should be no more rioting in the city, and there was only one

method by which Jason could prevent rioting in the city ; it was by putting a stop to the preaching. This was a very ingenious device. If Paul could have met the mob, he would have met it gladly. He who said of himself that he had fought wild beasts at Ephesus would have been willing to fight these wild beasts in Thessalonica. But if he continued in his ministry, he would endanger the man who had generously taken him into his house and cared for him. This was too much for the chivalry of Paul ; this he would not do. So he retreated from Thessalonica and left the infant church just born.

It appeared to have in it greater promise than any church which Paul had up to that time visited. It included some Jews ; a few Greeks ; a great multitude of proselytes ; and some noble and wealthy women. No mention is made of its including any noble or wealthy men. But though Paul could no longer preach in Thessalonica, he could write letters. A letter would not arouse a mob as a speech would. So, on arriving at Corinth, he takes the first opportunity which is afforded to send back a letter to the Thessalonians. This letter is full of warm, tender, earnest affection. It is mainly a friendly personal letter. There is very little theology in it. It is quite as remarkable for what it omits as what it contains. It says nothing about Christ crucified, whom Paul tells the Corinthians he determined in Corinth to make the subject of his ministry ; only an incidental reference to Christ's

death, because he must have died in order to be raised from the dead ; nothing about his patient endurance of evil ; nothing about his life and example ; nothing about his teachings. Paul begins by recalling to the Thessalonians their reception of him, and his affection for them, and the evidence he gave of that affection by the service he rendered them, by the life he lived with them, by his refusal to be at any expense to them whatever for support, by the work he did with his own hands. He recalls to them how gladly they received his gospel, how they put aside idols in order, as he says, to wait for the coming of the Lord. He reminds them that from their church went forth such reports, that the cities of Macedonia round about learned of this remarkable gathering in which Jew and pagan, poor and rich, were united, for the first time, perhaps, in Grecian history, certainly in the history of this particular city. He urged upon them the highest standards of righteousness, purity, and truth ; and the ground on which he urges this is that the Messiah is coming, and coming soon. But some have already died. Will they lose this Messianic kingdom ? Have they been banished to the shadowy Hades in which the Greeks believed ? And are they there to remain, losing the glory of the coming of the Lord ? No. They will come first, and we who still live will follow after.

“ But I would not that you should be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that have fallen asleep, in order that ye should not grieve as do the rest — those who have no

hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so also those that, because of Jesus, have but fallen asleep, God will lead forth with him. For this we say to you, by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those that are asleep. For the Lord himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise up first. Then we, the living, who remain, shall be snatched up together with them in the clouds, unto a meeting with the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Therefore, strengthen one another with these words. But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write to you. For ye yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, even as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.”¹

Paul then goes on to explain that this hope which he has put before them of a kingdom close at hand is given to them not for their mere delectation; it is given to incite them to higher, nobler, purer living. Because this kingdom is coming, because it is close at hand, they are to live pure and holy lives; they are to be industrious and honest; they are not to be drunken; they are to watch as sentinels watch upon guard; they are to care for one another and comfort one another; they are to rejoice even in times of persecution, buoyed up by

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 13-v. 3.

this hope of a speedy deliverance and a speedy victory. And he ends with this prayer: "And the very God of peace sanctify you completely; and may your spirit and soul and body be entire and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹ The letter begins by calling on them to turn aside from idols, to look for the Coming; it goes on to answer objections to that Coming and to develop the doctrine of the Coming; and it closes with a prayer that they may be so kept that they shall be blameless at the Coming.

What was the effect of this letter on the Thessalonian church we do not know. We have only two sources to guide us in answering that question. One is the effect which a similar faith has had at other epochs in Church history; the other, a second letter which Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.

In the beginning of this century an enthusiastic and devout man by the name of Miller, as a result of study of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, came to the conclusion that Christ would come at a certain date. He went about preaching in the Northern States this Coming of the Lord. He also thought that the secret of the forcefulness of Christianity was a visible power and glory. He thought it would come with "observation," and men would be able to say, "Lo here, lo there." Great numbers of adherents flocked about him. Men were not incited by this expectation to live holily, without blame, with purity and with

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23.

industry. They laid aside their industries, forgot the common duties of life, were absorbed in the expectation of a sudden miraculous Coming. Wherever that wave of excitement swept over the country it left behind it a moral and spiritual desolation. The excitement of to-day was followed by death to-morrow. Like a prairie fire, it left but burnt grass. Some such effect seems to have followed in the church at Thessalonica. The Thessalonian Christians seem to have stopped their work, given up their industry, and folded their hands while they watched for the Coming of the Lord in power and clouds and great glory.

And so Paul writes his second letter to the Thessalonians to correct the errors into which they have fallen. He reiterates the Coming of the Messiah ; re-declares that the Christ will come in power and glory, and will destroy his enemies and will establish his kingdom. But he tells them that he will not come immediately. Daniel, living in the age of Antiochus Epiphanes, has painted the picture of that strange, mad, brilliant king. He has painted him in colors none too vivid, as the embodiment of all that is blasphemous, profane, and wicked. Paul recurs to this picture, and he tells the Thessalonians that the coming of Christ cannot be until such a man of sin appears, and comes to the fullness of his growth. Had Paul ever heard the story of the tares and wheat? Did he know that the wheat could not be gathered until the tares had grown, also, to their ripeness? Had he ever heard

the story of Christ's talk with his disciples, just before his death, as they sat on the hill overlooking Jerusalem, when he told them that not one stone should be left above another, and warned them that wars and rumors of wars and decadence in the Church must first come? At all events, in some way or other Paul reached the conclusion that the kingdom of God could not come until the kingdom of evil was itself perfected. And thus he cautions the Thessalonians : —

“But we beseech you, brethren, for the sake of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that you allow not your understanding to be lightly overthrown nor yourselves to be thrown into tumult; neither by your own spiritual ecstasy, nor by the speech of others, nor by an epistle as from us, so as to imagine that the day of the Lord is close at hand. Let no one deceive you by any means; because that day shall not come except there come the falling away first, and the man of sin be unveiled, the son of destruction, who sets himself against and exalts himself above every one that is called God or is an object of worship, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth that he is God. Remember ye not that while I yet was with you I said these things to you? And now ye know that which holds him back in order that he may be revealed in his own time. For already the mystery of lawlessness is at work, only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way; and then will be unveiled the lawless one, whom the Lord shall destroy by the breath of his mouth, and bring to naught by the glory of his coming: — that lawless one whose coming

is accompanied with the superhuman working of Satan, with all power and lying signs and wonders, and with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness for those that are perishing because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.”¹

He ends this epistle, as he ended the other, with practical counsel — that men be quiet, that they attend to their own business, that they go on with their industries, that they do not think they hasten the coming of the kingdom by sitting and looking for it, but by living righteous, holy, and godly lives.

As a simple interpretation of Paul's letters this chapter should, perhaps, stop here. But the reader has perhaps, if he cares, a right to know what impression these letters have produced on my own mind, and what I hold respecting the subject of them, — the Second Coming of Christ. I speak on this subject with great hesitation; not because I have not studied it, but because the more I have studied, the more hesitation I feel about speaking dogmatically upon it. Some things are, however, very clear to me; some are less clear.

It is, in the first place, very clear to me that Paul believed that the Messiah was to come again, and to come in his own generation.² “We which

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 1-10.

² Not necessarily while he was living, but certainly during the lifetime of that generation. This declaration “We which are alive” agrees with the declaration, “We shall not all sleep.” 1 Cor. xv. 51.

are alive," he says. He speaks in the present tense. It is equally certain that this expectation has not been fulfilled. Even if we suppose, as some do, that all that which was true in the prophecy was fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem, that destruction does not fill to the full Paul's picture of the coming of Christ in clouds and glory, of the dead arising and being caught up in the clouds, and of the instant destruction of all sin and iniquity from the world. But Paul was mistaken not only in his conception of the time of the Messiah's coming; he was mistaken also in his conception of the secret of the power of the kingdom. The kingdom of God does not come with observation. Men are not to say, "Lo here, lo there." The glory of the kingdom of God is, as Paul told the Corinthians a little later, the glory of the cross, the glory of self-sacrifice. It is the glory of crowned suffering. It is not by clouds and angels and archangels, not by the pomp and circumstance of war, terrestrial or celestial, that Christ conquers, but by the "invincible might of meekness." All this is true, and yet it does not follow that there is no truth in Paul's expectation. It does not follow that there is no meaning in the prophecies of the Old Testament, the prophetic words of Christ himself as they are reported in the Gospels, and these prophetic words of Paul in the Epistles to the Thessalonians.

The Bible looks upon all history as a revelation of God. That is the end and object of it. The

divine end of human development is not what we call civilization, — steam engines and highways and railroads and telephones and ceiled houses and fine clothes and luxurious food ; it is not a comfortable and easy time ; it is not even merely liberty and righteousness. It is the revelation of God to the sons of men, because they are sons of God. In the Old Testament times this revelation of God is made through divers prophets and patriarchs, speaking in various ways that which God has witnessed to them in their own consciousness. This revelation of God in the Old Testament times is itself, in the Hebrew conception, a preparation for another, a clearer and a better revelation of God, which has come to pass in the New Testament : in the manger at Bethlehem ; in the life that follows ; in the cross ; in the resurrection. But this is not the consummation of the revelation. This much seems to me clear in the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. This revelation and all that has grown out of it, this revelation and the love which has flowed from it, this revelation and the brotherhood which it has helped to cement together, this revelation and the witness of the Spirit of God that could not come until men had some conception of the divine love to men — this revelation is itself the preparation for a further revelation yet to come. The end is not yet. The book of Revelation is not a closed book. As the Old Testament was a preparation for the New, so the New Testament is a preparation for some disclosure of the glory

of God not yet understood by us. Now, as in his earthly life, Christ walks incognito. How few there are who pierce the disguise and comprehend his divinity! To many still he is but the son of a carpenter. To many still he is no Son of God. And the revelation of divinity will not come to its completion until that disclosure which he has made of himself, in humbleness and in love, is supplemented and perfected by a revelation so splendid, so shining, so universal, that the men who will not see cannot help but see; and mankind, looking back from the splendid manifestation of divinity yet to be flashed upon a startled world, and connecting it with the manger, and the life of suffering, and the Cross, will see the splendor of that earthly life as they cannot see it until it is interpreted by the splendor of the celestial. Not by standing with our faces turned upward looking into the heavens are we to prepare for this greater glory, nor yet by walking forward with our face always turned backward to Christ in the manger or on the Cross, but with our expectant faces toward the future, believing that the hymn we sing, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," will yet find its fulfillment, and the hope and sometimes anguish of faith long delayed will find its answer in a revelation which no man can interpret because no man can understand.

CHAPTER VI

PAUL AT CORINTH

FORTY-FIVE miles from Athens lies, or rather formerly lay, the city of Corinth. Athens was the intellectual metropolis, Corinth the commercial metropolis of Achaia. Even more than Athens it at this time reflected the national character. It was situated on an isthmus between two seas, the *Ægean* on the east, the *Ionian* on the west; and on a plain between two ranges of hills separating northern from southern Greece. Foreign commerce, to avoid the stormy peninsula, came to Corinth, where either the goods were trans-shipped or the vessels were carried by a kind of roadway from one sea to the other; domestic traders desiring to pass from northern to southern Greece were compelled to pass at Corinth through the mountain ranges which separated northern and southern Greece. Hence Corinth was the gateway of both internal and marine commerce. It was the commercial metropolis of ancient Greece. And its glory and its shame were those of a great commercial metropolis.

It had been a great and a glorious city. "The light of all Greece," Cicero calls it. But two hundred years before Paul's visit it had been visited by

a Roman army, and vengeance had been taken upon it for some real or fancied insult put upon Rome. It had been given over to sack. The men had been killed, the women and the children had been sold into slavery, and the city, with its temples and its altars and its public buildings, had been given to the flames. For a hundred years it lay in ruins. Then Julius Cæsar resolved to rebuild it. He sent thither Roman colonists, and it regained something of its ancient eminence.

This city, with a great foreign population gathered in it, still had a great commerce and enjoyed commercial privileges and some political and social privileges as well. For it was the natural capital of Greece. And whatever example Corinth set, Greece was likely to follow. What Paris has been to France, that in some sense Corinth was to Greece. It was pervaded by the commercial spirit. We are mistaken if we imagine the Greeks to have been exclusively an intellectual people. They were also a very commercial people. Five hundred years and more before, Pindar had said, "Money, money, money makes the man," in bitter satire of his countrymen; and this spirit that money makes the man was nowhere in Greece embodied as it was in Corinth. It was a city given over to luxury and to the vices of luxury. Greece was never a very highly moral state, and Corinth was preëminently an immoral city even for Greece. The religion of that day had nothing to do with morality. There was no attempt on the part of the priests in the

temples to promote moral life. It is said that there were a thousand prostitutes connected with the temple to Venus. That simple fact is sufficient to indicate how little effect the religion of Greece had in promoting moral life. The women of Corinth were left, for the most part, to grow up in ignorance, and were kept in seclusion in their homes. Only the prostitutes were educated. They had their receptions, and in them the wisest and the best, the philosophers and the moralists, were wont to gather for brilliant conversation with one another and with women who in our time we would not allow within our homes. So far had this gone that it became a proverb in Greece ; for a woman to become devoted to a life of shame was called in Greece to Corinthianize.

This moral quality of Corinth had affected its intellectual quality. Philosophy was no longer philosophy. It was sophism. The sophists were teachers of a pseudo-philosophy.¹ They organized their schools, plied the arts of the rhetorician and, perhaps it should be said, of the logician, certainly of the dialectician. They plied them for money, — which was perhaps legitimate ; they plied them not for truth, — which was certainly not at all legitimate. The average teacher in Corinth had that idea of the duty of a professor of instruction which

¹ It does not come within the scope of this volume to do any more than give the merest outline of the schools of philosophy dominant in Corinth in Paul's time, and only for the purpose of interpreting his life and letters.

is entertained and frankly avowed by some journalists at the present day respecting the profession of journalism. They say that the newspaper is a commercial enterprise; it gives to the people what the people want; if you do not like the newspaper, you must change the appetite of the people. So these professors of rhetoric and logic in Corinth said, "We are conducting a commercial enterprise, and we give the people what the people want." And what the people wanted was ingenuity in intellectual fence. The sophist pretended to know everything and to teach everything. He would talk to you on any subject his auditors might choose for a theme. Much, again, like some modern journalists. It made little difference to him whether he knew anything about it or not; he had skill in intellectual fence, and that was enough. He would discuss, therefore, all manner of questions, — political, moral, philosophical, abstract, concrete, religious, secular, terrestrial, celestial, present, future. Long before this time Plato had, with biting sarcasm, characterized these teachers of sophism, with whom Paul was to come in conflict in Corinth, and this is his characterization of them: "A sophist," he says — these are not, indeed, his exact words, but Jowett's epitome from one of his dialogues — "a sophist is one skilled in a contradictory, dissembling, undivine, fantastic, juggling-with-words art of imposition." That is a Greek philosopher's definition of Greek sophism.¹

¹ See Plato's *Sophist* and Jowett's Introduction thereto.

Such a spirit necessarily issued in universal skepticism. The sophists agreed in assuming that the mind could only know external phenomena; these were only the manifestations of reality; the reality itself could not be known. Even these phenomena could be known only approximately. For perception of these would differ with different men, and would depend upon their temperament, education, and circumstances, and in the same man would differ at different times. Man therefore could know nothing with certainty; he knew all things only relatively. There was no standard or criterion by which he could judge between the true and the false impression. He could therefore never be sure of what he did know, or thought he knew. He must therefore suspend judgment; hold all his knowledge tentatively; never say, I know, only, So it appears to me now.¹ The issue of this mental philosophy of Greece, at this period, is not unfairly represented by the sentence attributed to one of this school, "I only know that I know nothing."

Such was the mental philosophy of Corinth. Moral philosophy existed in two schools: Epicureanism and Stoicism, both dating from about the beginning of the third century before Christ.² The

¹ For a good brief description of this pseudo-philosophy, see Windelband's *Hist. of Phil.* 197 ff. Paul's "We know in part and we prophesy in part" and "We see through a glass darkly" is a recognition of the truth in skepticism, while his affirmation, Nevertheless, as things are, faith and hope and love abide, and of these we are sure, is his reply to skepticism.

² Epicurus lived B. C. 342-270; Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, dates of birth and death unknown, flourished about B. C. 290.

doctrine of Epicurus was that the object of philosophy is practical, not theoretical; it aims not to give us a theory of the universe, but a happy life. His philosophy, that happiness is the end of life and therefore the object of philosophy, easily degenerated into that conception with which his name is popularly connected — the doctrine that enjoyment of animal pleasures is the chief end of life. It had already become before Paul's time what Lecky calls it, "little more than a principle of disintegration or an apology for vice, or at best the religion of tranquil and indifferent natures, animated by no strong moral enthusiasm."¹ If philosophy may be judged by its tendency, Epicureanism, as a system of moral philosophy, is justly condemned by the moral degradation into which it speedily descended. But in the teachings of Epicurus it was no defense of sensualism. It is not possible, he said, to live happily without living prudently, honorably, and justly. He distinguished between the lively pleasures of energy and the quiet pleasures of repose, and urged his disciples to seek the latter and higher happiness. For he put mental joys above those physical pleasures which are due to self-indulgence; in other words, he put happiness above pleasure, though his disciples, in practice, soon reversed the order. But in whatever order the various kinds of happiness are ranked, it was of the essence of his system, not merely that virtue tends to produce happiness, but that it is virtue *because*

¹ Lecky: *Hist. of European Morals*, i. 186.

it tends to produce happiness, and that is the greatest virtue which produces the greatest happiness.

Stoicism was a far more strenuous and muscular form of philosophy. It was a genuine and earnest protest against the universality of pleasure-seeking and the superficiality of the sophists. But though more earnest in its spirit and more moral in its tendency than the rival system of Epicurus, it was scarcely less materialistic. The Stoic was what we call in modern times a monist. He thought there was only one thing in the world, namely, matter and force, the latter being a subtle form of matter, and that God and the soul were themselves forms of matter and of force. He did not recognize a personal God ; but he did recognize law. There was an inherent, an indestructible law, and men should obey this law, not because they must, as though they were machines, but because obedience was reasonable. The Pharisee rested the duty of obligation to law upon conscience ; the Stoic rested it upon reason. Thus Stoicism was a protest against the immorality of the time, because it was irrational ; and equally a protest against the superficial philosophy of the time, because it was irrational. Yet, though reason was appealed to, it was that it might interpret necessity. It was equally impossible to escape Fate or Destiny or to modify it. It is not possible, practically, to differentiate Stoicism from fatalism. It did not in terms deny the freedom of the will ; but it denied that the will could achieve anything. And in its reaction against the happi-

ness theory of the world it discarded wholly the sentiments. Of the faith which perceives the invisible, of the hope which believes that righteousness brings reward here or hereafter, peace now or peace in eternity, and of the love which feels a sympathy for men and a desire to serve them with unrewarded activity, there is scarce any trace to be found in the writings of the Stoics, who were the moralists of the first century. There is very little of it to be found even in Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic of a later age, already pervaded in some measure by the spirit of Christianity.

This threefold philosophy has reappeared in our own time, somewhat modified by the difference in temperament between the Anglo-Saxon and the Greek, and by the intellectual difference between the first and the nineteenth centuries. In our time the skepticism is known as agnosticism, the Epicureanism as utilitarianism, the Stoicism as determinism. The first is the doctrine that nothing can be known with certainty concerning that reality which lies back of phenomena, that unity which makes of them a universe ; the second is the doctrine that the only rational motive for action is the expectation of happiness, the only basis of ethics, the power of action to produce happiness, and the only standard of virtue the results of action in happiness ; the third is the doctrine that all the events of life are determined for man by a law or power outside himself, that his freedom is apparent, not real.¹

¹ The first, — agnosticism, is illustrated by Huxley's quotation

Into the city of Corinth with its commercial spirit, its grossly immoral life, and its religion compounded of these three elements,—a skepticism fatal to all intellectual earnestness, an Epicureanism making happiness the end of life, and a fatalism destructive of all sense of personal responsibility, came Paul, discouraged and disheartened. His mission up to this time may well have seemed to him a failure. He had started out from Arabia, after his three years of study, with high hopes, and had returned to Damascus to tell the Pharisees, of whom he was one, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; and they had driven him from the city. He had then gone up to Jerusalem. Surely, he had said, they will hear me; they know me; they know how earnest I was in persecuting the Christians, and now that I have the light I can give it to them. He tried to give it to them, and they

from Kant (*Some Controverted Questions*, p. 276): "The greatest and perhaps the sole use of philosophy is, after all, merely negative; . . . and instead of discovering truth has only the modest merit of preventing error;" the second, utilitarianism, by the definition of John Stuart Mill (*Utilitarianism*, p. 9): "The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, utility, or the greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to produce happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure;" the third, determinism, by the affirmation of J. Cotter Morrison (*The Service of Man*, p. 289), "A man with a criminal nature and education, under given circumstances of temptation, can no more help committing a crime than he could help having a headache under given conditions of brain and stomach."

treated him, or would have treated him if they could, as they had treated his Master. He had to flee from Jerusalem. He had undertaken almost singlehanded to carry this message into Greece. The Christian Church had very little faith in his mission. It did not believe that Christianity applied to the pagans. And he had gone out with almost no support except the benediction of the prayer-meeting at Antioch; and nothing had come of his mission. He had gone to city after city, to synagogue after synagogue, and every synagogue had treated him as he had been treated at Damascus and Jerusalem. When he turned from the synagogue to the pagans, he had found himself at once confronted with the charge of endeavoring to raise an insurrection, to create animosity to the Roman empire and the Roman emperor, and to initiate a new kingdom. He was silenced by the Roman authorities. In no single place had he been able to stay more than a few days or a few weeks at the utmost. No wonder that he came to Corinth disheartened and discouraged. "I was with you," he says, "in fear and in weakness, and in much trembling."

He reviewed the past, and he saw that his message of a second coming of Christ within the present generation to revolutionize the world had accomplished nothing. He looked upon Corinth, and he saw that the hope of a sensuous glory yet to come was but a poor weapon with which to attack a present sensuous glory; that a picture of a future

kingdom of heaven would have in it no power to stir the heart of a people given over to commercial and luxurious splendor in their own time. They might well have answered, had they known the proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and their answer would not have been wholly unreasonable.

Moreover, he had been following the Christ, and he had received more and more the Christ spirit. He had come to see what at first he did not see, the glory of humiliation, the riches of poverty, the exaltation of abasement, the radiancy of self-sacrifice. He began, as he had in other cities, at first, apparently, accomplishing nothing. But when companions came, he took heart of courage, and went into the synagogue and preached. There he met with the same experience he had met before. The Jews would not hear; they reviled him. But he did not meet opposition as he had met it before, by fleeing to another city. He cast down before the Jewish opponents the gauntlet of defiance; took refuge in a house adjoining the synagogue; took with him the ruler of the synagogue, who had been converted to Christianity; and set up what might be called a rival synagogue adjoining. Thus he began his real ministry in Corinth.

The Jews presently tried the same tactics they had tried successfully at Philippi and Thessalonica. They made an assault upon him and brought him before the Roman governor, a brother of the famous Seneca. But now they had no charge

which they could bring against Paul. They could not charge him with preaching a new king and a new kingdom ; for the theme of his preaching had changed. And when Gallio had investigated and heard what they had to say, his answer was, in substance, this : " If this concerned Roman law, I would hear it ; but it is a matter of words and names and your own religion : to be a judge of these matters I have no mind." And he drove them from his judgment-seat. And when the Greeks took the ruler of the synagogue who had brought the complaint against Paul, and beat him before the judgment-seat, Gallio let them do it ; he did not care.

So much for Paul's outward experience. He remained in Corinth a year and a half. What did he preach ? The omissions of the Bible are marvelous, and some of them inexplicable. Why is it that Luke gave us the report of Paul's sermon at Athens, when nothing came of the preaching, and has given us no report of any sermon at Corinth, out of which grew the first considerable and prosperous church ? But if Luke has not reported the Corinthian preaching, Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians indicates its character. The second chapter in that Letter defines his philosophy, and describes his method of meeting both the agnosticism and the utilitarianism of his time. How he met determinism we shall see when we come to consider his letters to the Romans. This second chapter is as follows :¹ —

¹ The word which I sometimes translate " wisdom " and some-

“And I, when I came to you, brethren, came not with an ambition to excel other teachers in rhetorical or sophistical skill, in declaring to you my testimony concerning God. For I did not choose to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, — and him crucified. And in weakness and in fear and in much trembling was I with you ; and my speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive rhetoric of sophism, but in demonstration of spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Yet we speak wisdom, among those who are full grown, but not the wisdom of this age, neither of the rulers of this age, who are becoming quite good for nothing. But the wisdom we speak is the wisdom of God, a mystical wisdom, a hidden wisdom, which God prepared before the ages and which is to result in our glory, which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of this glory. But, as it is written, Things which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard and which have not entered into the heart of man to conceive, these God has prepared for those who love him.¹ But God has revealed them to us through the spirit ; for the spirit [of man] searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the experiences of man except the spirit of man which is in him ? So also the experiences of God knoweth no one except the Spirit of God. But we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which comes forth from God, in order that

times “sophism,” in this paraphrase, is the same word in the Greek. There is a play in the Greek which I have not found possible to represent in the English.

¹ Isaiah lxiv. 4.

we may understand the experiences which are freely imparted to us by God. These also we speak, not in forms of speech which can be taught by human wisdom, but in such as are taught by the Spirit, interpreting to spiritual men spiritual truths. But the unspiritual man¹ does not receive the experiences of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritual man discerns all experiences, but he himself is discerned by no one. 'For who knew the mind of the Lord? who shall counsel him?'² but we have the mind of Christ."³

Paul feared lest he should be confounded with the Greek sophists, and Christianity should be regarded as simply a new school of philosophy. When we remember how often it has been so regarded, how often, even to-day, theology and religion are confounded, how often to believe a system of philosophy is accounted the same as to believe in Christ, how often the creed or formulation of a system of theology is made the test of the Church, and of the loyalty of the ministry, we cannot think Paul's apprehension groundless. Against this misapprehension he guards himself in the most explicit terms. The Greeks, he says, seek after a philosophy; they are given over to sophism, dialectics, ingenious fence, fine rhetoric. With all that I would have nothing to do. I came to proclaim a Person, not to teach a new philosophy. Not by the acceptance of a philosophy but by contact with a Person do we acquire wisdom and righteousness

¹ Literally, *psychic man*. ² Isaiah xl. 13. ³ 1 Cor. chap. ii.

and purity and deliverance from this present evil world.¹

But with clearness of vision he sees the half-concealed premise which underlay the skepticism which confronted him, and with his accustomed boldness he frankly accepts, and indeed vigorously affirms, the logic of the conclusion.

If its premise be granted, its logical result must be accepted also. Let it be granted that man is only a higher kind of animal, that he has only those avenues to knowledge which the animal possesses, that he can know only what he sees, hears, touches, tastes, and what by his reasoning powers he can conclude from these sensible phenomena, and all the great religious convictions which are the foundation of the higher life of humanity disappear. The "natural" man is necessarily an agnostic; and by "natural" man Paul does not mean a wicked man. The transliteration of the Greek gives us the best interpretation of his meaning, — the *psychic* man. The *psychic* man, he says, receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. That is, the man who depends for his knowledge upon his senses and his reason, upon the use of those faculties which he possesses in common with the animal, though they are in an immeasurably higher state of development, must be an agnostic. Paul's issue is not with the conclusion of the agnostic but with his

¹ 1 Cor. i. 22, 23, 29, 30.

premise. Every man, Paul affirms, possesses a two-fold nature. Sometimes he speaks of man as three-fold, — body, soul, and spirit ; but generally he combines the body and the soul, that is, the material mechanism and the psychic or immaterial portion which he possesses in common with the animal, in one nature, which Paul calls the flesh. This soul of man includes the social faculties, and the reasoning powers, which he shares with the animal though they are developed in an eminent degree beyond that of any other animal. But in addition to this, man possesses a spirit. This includes his conscience, whereby he perceives the essential and inherent distinction between right and wrong ; faith, whereby he perceives immediately and directly the invisible realities, whereby he looks upon the things which are not seen and are eternal ; ¹ hope, which enables him to look forward to that which transcends any present experience and prophetically to realize it ; ² love, which according to Paul is no sensual passion, but a spiritual and divine experience, transcending and outliving, not only the body but the higher psychic experiences.³ By this spirit man is linked to God, by it he is provoked, excited, coerced to search that he may know more than phenomena, that he may understand the eternal reality which lies behind all phenomena. For he is never satisfied with simply knowing phenomena ; he searches the very depths of God himself ; and this restless spirit of inquiry constitutes itself an argument that

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 18.² Rom. viii. 24.³ 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

man is by his nature fitted for acquaintance with God.¹ Thus we know God, as we know one another, through the medium and in the domain of personal experience. We have received both in creation a spirit akin to God who has made us in his own image, and in redemption the spirit of God himself, which dwells within us; the double gift having been conferred that we may be sharers of the divine experience, partakers of the divine nature. These experiences cannot be interpreted except by analogues in spiritual experience. The gulf between the material and the spiritual is impassable; we can understand the spiritual only in and through the spiritual.

Out of this philosophy grows Paul's conception of preaching. The preacher is a prophet; he does not argue from phenomena to prove to the psychical man the probable truth of realities that are unseen. He is a herald, a witness; he testifies to the things which he knows, and he endeavors to evoke

¹ "*The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*" (1 Cor. ii. 10) may mean that as we turn our thoughts inward to search ourselves, so God searches, as it were, himself. The reference, then, would be to divine self-consciousness, and the argument would be that we know God, not by reasoning, but by the impression, as it were, of the divine self-consciousness on our own soul. This appears to be the common interpretation; but it seems to me to impute to Paul a metaphysical refinement foreign to his nature. The same word is throughout his writing used to designate the spiritual nature in man and the Spirit of God, and it is only by the context that the reader can determine which significance is to be given to it. See, for illustration, Rom. viii. 16, "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit.*"

a spiritual perception in the natural man, by calling into activity his dormant spiritual nature. Thus the power of the preacher is the power of a personal witness ; it does not rest in rhetorical excellence, though that may be made an instrument in the testifying. It does not rest in philosophical argument, though the preacher may show by philosophical argument that the truth to which he testifies is consistent with the phenomena perceived by the natural man. But the real secret of the preacher's power is his ability to reveal his own living spirit to the dormant spiritual man, and so awaken in him the capacity to receive the Spirit of God, which speaks in and through and to the spirit of man.

This is the mysticism of St. Paul.

Nor is he less radical in his method of meeting the utilitarianism of his time. Happiness is neither the end of life nor the criterion of virtue. The highest of humanity was a sufferer. Epicurus divided pleasures, as we have seen, into two classes : the pleasures of activity and the pleasures of repose : the first sensuous, the second intellectual. Christ knew neither. He was poor ; deprived not only of the luxuries but of the ordinary comforts of life ; without place, power, or the gratification of ambition. His life wore all the aspects and involved all the hardships of failure. He was without the intellectual pleasures of education, literature, congenial friendships, or the still more subtle pleasures of meditation, quietude, repose. After three years of

life, spent in poverty and in increasing obloquy, he died a shameful death. To follow him involved all his followers in a similar discarding of happiness and acceptance of crucifixion. If one would be his disciple he must take up his cross and follow him ; must chose as his portion " pain and the privation of pleasure." Such was the Leader and such the life Paul resolved to present to the Corinthians. Among you, he says, I did not choose to know anything except this Messiah, and to know him only as crucified.

This declaration of Paul has been often misquoted ; as though he affirmed as a principle of his life, which limited all his teaching, the determination never to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified ; as though this was the one and only theme of his instructions. But this is not what he says ; nor was his preaching thus limited. What he says is, I did not choose *among you* to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified. It is as if he had said, I came to a city mired in luxury and in self-indulgence ; notorious for its infamous license ; tickling itself with a pseudo-philosophy which did not affect the moral life ; a city whose only moral movement was a movement founded on pure reason, not on conscience ; a city in which meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, kindness, self-abasement, and humiliation were absolutely unknown, or known only to be scoffed at ; and I resolved to put away all the instruments on which I had before relied, all the methods I had before employed, and rely wholly upon the story

of Christ and his cross ; I resolved that I would rest my preaching, not on the glory of a Christ yet to come, but on the glory of a Christ who has already come ; not on a glory to be revealed in clouds and angels and power, but on a glory which is revealed in poverty, humiliation, crucifixion. In doing this, I resolved, too, that I would appeal to the spiritual that is in man. I would not appeal to men's ambition, and think to sanctify it by presenting to them a celestial picture to respond to their ambition. I came to see that in every man there is a power of insight, and I resolved that I would try to awaken that, dormant as it is, and make men see the invisible.

In brief, Paul's answer to utilitarianism is self-sacrifice ; his answer to agnosticism is spiritual insight.

Up to this time in Paul's experience he has said nothing about the crucifixion, except incidentally to refer to the death of Christ as a basis for setting forth the resurrection of Christ. From this time forth he has little to say about the resurrection of Christ ; so little, apparently, in his preaching to the Corinthians that some of the church came to the conclusion that there was no resurrection, and he writes them at length on the subject. In his previous sermons and in his previous letters to the Thessalonians he has nothing to say about the crucifixion and much to say of the second coming ; in his future letters, little to say of the second coming. Instead : he will depart and be with Christ ; he will

be absent from the body and present with the Lord; a crown of righteousness prepared for him awaits him.¹ Christianity becomes more and more to him a present life, less and less a mere hope of a future life. It is after this that he writes to the Romans that men are justified by faith alone. It is after this that he writes to the Philippians that because Christ hath humbled himself, and taken the form of a servant, and been obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him. It is after this that he writes to the Galatians, in mystical phrase, that he is crucified with Christ, nevertheless he lives; yet not he, but Christ lives in him. It is after this that he writes to the Corinthians that, even if he had known Christ after the flesh, he would not care for the knowledge, so surpassing is the mystical and spiritual vision of the ever-present Christ.² From this time forth he is the preacher of these two things: first, the glory of self-sacrifice; and, secondly, the mystical life of the inward faith.

Thus we have traced in Paul's experience three stages. In the first we see him a Pharisee. He is conscientious; he has studied the law; he believes in it; he endeavors to fulfill it; and as regards what we call the ceremonial law — that is, as regards the law defining man's especial obligations to

¹ Phil. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 6-8; 2 Tim. iv. 8. In his Epistles to the Corinthians there are only incidental references to the second coming: *e. g.*, 1 Cor. i. 7; xv. 23.

² Rom. iii. 28; Phil. ii. 6-11; Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 16.

God — he is blameless. But he has hope of a Messiah who is coming to make Jerusalem the queen city of the world, and when he sees a sect arising which declares that the Crucified One is the Messiah, he will have none of it, and when it grows strong he sets himself to work to destroy it. In the second stage of his spiritual experience he has seen this crucified Saviour risen; he has thus brought to him the consciousness of the resurrection; in that consciousness of the resurrection he gets his conviction that Jesus is the Messiah. But he still believes in the Pharisaic conception of the kingdom of God; he still thinks that the Messiah is straightway coming to bring about that kingdom of God, and he goes forth as the herald of a coming king. In the third stage of his experience he is no longer a Pharisee, and he is no longer a Pharisaic Christian. He sees there is no glory like the glory of self-abasement and self-sacrifice; that there is no evidence of religion like the evidence of the inward witness of the soul itself. He speaks as a mystic to mystics, as a spiritual man to spiritual men, and he sets forth the glory of the life which has been lived on the earth. And when the glory of the risen Christ or the glory of the Christ before the beginning of the world is referred to, it is only that it may intensify the glory of the earthly career.

Along with this change comes a change in his conception of his function and his work. He begins to see now that the Roman Empire is to last. He begins to see that the Christian religion must

be made the religion of the Roman Empire. He no longer goes from place to place as a mere herald of a coming king. He stays a year and a half in Corinth; he stays two years in Ephesus. He plans also to extend his missionary tour. He resolves that he will go to Rome.¹ A little later he resolves to go from Rome to Spain,² the westernmost boundary of the Roman Empire. He has enlarged the conception of his mission, — it is to make faith in Christ the faith of the Roman Empire. He has changed his conception of the instrument of power, — it is no longer the glory of the Coming One, it is the glory of One who has come and has dwelt upon the earth. And he has changed the method of his address, — he does not appeal to the reason, endeavoring to win men by philosophical argument: he does not address himself to the appetite for the marvelous, promising in a second coming a miracle greater than any that has been wrought; he addresses himself to the spiritual in man, awakening in him that which shall perceive the divine love.

¹ Acts xix. 21.

² Rom. xv. 24, 28.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

PAUL'S First Letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus, three or four years after his departure from Corinth, in answer to a letter from the Corinthian church which brought him some sad news and some suggestive inquiries. In his response Paul deals with six topics:—

1. The spiritual basis of knowledge.
2. Certain factions which had arisen in the Corinthian church.
3. Certain immoralities which had entered into and threatened to destroy it.
4. Certain specific questions addressed to him by the church.
5. Problems growing out of varieties of spiritual gifts claimed by different members.
6. Immortality and the resurrection.

In the previous chapter I have considered Paul's treatment of the first topic; the others I take up in the order in which Paul treats them.

THE FACTIONS

Within a quarter of a century after Christ's death there had already appeared that sectarianism

which was to be the future bane of the Christian Church. And it had appeared in much the same form. Factions arose which called themselves after the name of eminent prophets and teachers. It is a curious illustration how little the Church of Christ has really bowed to the authority of Scripture, which in its creeds it has so much exalted, that, in spite of Paul's earnest condemnation of these Corinthian factions, they have been so constantly repeated since. Not to mention the Dominicans and Franciscans and Benedictines, — followers respectively of Dominic, Francis of Assisi, and Benedict of Mersia, or the Jansenists and Jesuits, one of them avowed followers of Jansenius, the others really followers of Loyola but taking the name of Jesus, — we have had Augustinians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, Wesleyans, — that is, parties doing exactly what Paul condemned, one saying I am of Calvin, another I am of Luther, exactly as in Paul's time one said I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos. Indeed in one respect the parallel has been even more exact; for we have had in modern times three separate sects disavowing sectarian principles and sectarian creeds, and endeavoring to avoid the appearance of sectarianism by calling themselves by the name of Christ.

Concerning the four parties mentioned by Paul nothing is with certainty known. Their names as ecclesiastical parties do not reappear in the history of the Church. The spirit of faction has been permanent, particular factions have not. But we

know enough to form a reasonable surmise as to their constitution and character. There is no reason to suppose that either of the individuals mentioned approved the organization of the party which assumed his name, or intended to make himself its leader. It is certain that Paul did not. There is no reason to suppose that either Apollos or Peter did. It is certain that the great leaders in the Church, in subsequent ages, had no such purpose. It was not the design of Augustine or Luther, of Calvin or Wesley to form a sect or school of followers. Each of these great prophets saw some great truth which the world needed, and gave expression to it. Men of similar temperament, attracted by his message, accepted and repeated it, in varying forms, and then the school was formed, which subsequent debates, growing out of self-defense or of attack upon rival or antagonistic schools, crystallized into a party or sect, with its creed, its form of worship, its order of government, — in short, into a church, no longer simply of Christ, but of Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley as the case might be. It is probable that history has repeated itself, and that neither Paul, Apollos, nor Peter intended to form a party, and that neither gave any sanction to the party which claimed to follow him, and that those who said "I am of Christ" followed Christ no more truly than did the others.

The first faction probably grew out of the Jewish element in the Christian Church. Christianity had

grown out of Judaism, and there was a large and at first dominant party in the Church, with headquarters at Jerusalem, which held that Christianity was a phase of Judaism ; that the pagan must become a Jew before he could become a Christian ; that the laws of Moses were of perpetual and universal obligation, and that the Church of Christ was subject to them.¹ This party insisted, therefore, that converts from paganism must be circumcised, that they must not eat meat offered to idols, that they must not intermarry with pagans, and if already intermarried must separate, that they must observe the Jewish feast-days, especially the Sabbaths,—in a word, that they must be conscientious Jews. They cited chapter and verse from the Old Testament in support of their contention, and might have coupled therewith the declaration of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away till all be fulfilled. They took the name of Peter as their leader, because he was in some special measure an apostle to the Jews and had remained pre-eminent in the Jewish Church ; but there is small reason to believe that he personally sanctioned their principles, their policy, or their spirit. The analogue of this Jewish or Petrine faction is the conservative party in our own time, the Puritan of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Covenanters of Scotland, the Huguenots of France, and the

¹ This party and its development in the Church will be described more fully in the chapter on Paul's Letter to the Galatians.

most scrupulous and observant in the Roman Church in all ages. In short, this party is analogous to that which regards the Christian religion as a law of God, and obedience to that law as the chief characteristic of the Christian life.

The second faction was born of and supplied by the Gentile element in the Christian Church. The Gentiles knew nothing of Judaism, and cared nothing for it. Its feast-days and fast-days, its sacrificial system, its regulations concerning clean and unclean, its practice of circumcision, were all nothing to them, and to these they were naturally indifferent. But this was not all; the Greeks and Romans were not accustomed to identify morality with religion. The idea that God is a righteous God, and demands righteousness of his children, which is the fundamental doctrine of Mosaism, was a novel doctrine to them. They were more ready to accept the hope of a present emancipation from galling bondage, ecclesiastical and civil, or an expectation of a great enfranchisement in the future with the second coming of the Messiah, than they were to accept such a change of character as would make them truthful, pure, generous, self-sacrificing. They disregarded the Levitical law, and were quite ready to disregard also the moral law. They claimed Paul as their leader, though it is certain that Paul, as we shall see in this First Epistle to the Corinthians, repudiated very vigorously their repudiation of the moral law, and their separation of morality and religion. The analogue of this

Pauline party is to be found in history in the liberal and progressive party in the Church in our own time, in the Cavaliers of the seventeenth century, in the more lax and careless spirits in court circles in the Roman Church in the Middle Ages, and in the Antinomians and Anabaptists of Germany in the time of Luther.

The third party grew out of an endeavor, which had been made previous to Christ, to unite Grecian philosophy with the Jewish religion. This endeavor had given rise to an Alexandrian school, Greco-Jewish in its character, and deriving its name from Alexandria, where its chief activity was seen. This school, by a process not necessary to describe here,¹ endeavored, by allegorizing the Old Testament Scriptures, so to explain them, or to explain them away, as to make them appear rational, and consonant with Grecian philosophy. Apollos had come from Alexandria; and this Greco-Jewish school, importing its allegorical and rationalistic spirit into the Christian Church, called itself after the name of Apollos. The analogue of this school is to be found in what is called the New Theology of our time, and in the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages.

Finally, there was a party which claimed to be no party, which put aside Peter and Paul and Apollos, and with them the Old Testament Scrip-

¹ This party and its development will be described more fully in the chapter on Paul's letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians.

tures, and such New Testament records and traditions as existed, or gave to them a wholly secondary place, and claimed direct and immediate fellowship with Christ, and inspiration from him. It called itself, therefore, by his name, and claimed preëminently to derive its principles and its authority from him. It was the mystical, the sanctified, the holiness party of the first century. It has its analogue in that party in more modern times which discards all traditions, including the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which recognizes no other authority than what is called the inward witness of the spirit, and which assumes preëminence in vision and faith. It is historically illustrated by the Brethren of the Common Life, the Illuminati, the Quietists, and other similar mystical sects.

If the reader thinks that in these characterizations essential distinctions are ignored, and incongruous qualities are strangely intermixed in a blurred picture, he must remember that distinctions are thus ignored and qualities are thus intermingled in actual history. Loyalty to conscience merges by insensible degrees into a despotic and dwarfing literalism, liberty into a dangerous and self-indulgent license, intellectual activity into confounding dogma with truth and creed with life, the spirit of faith and hope into a disembodied religion, incapable, because disembodied, of effective warfare in this world. Each of the four parties which Paul entitles by the names of the

leaders which they had respectively chosen possessed, it may safely be assumed, both the virtues and the vices of analogous parties in subsequent times. They possessed severally the excellencies and the defects, the truths and the errors of the more modern forms of conservatism, liberalism, intellectualism, and mysticism.

Thus there were four nascent factions in the Corinthian Church: the conservative, or legal, or Puritan; the radical, or liberal, or Gentile; the philosophical, or scholastic, or Alexandrian; and the mystical, or transcendental. Each of them took the name of a leader famous in the Church, though probably not one of them had the leader's authority for so doing. Each separated itself from the others and constituted an independent party if not an independent organization. Thus began sectarianism in the Christian Church. Thus Paul condemned it:—

“Now I beseech you, brethren, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you; but that ye be perfectly united in the same mind and in the same purpose. For I have been given to understand concerning you my brethren, by members of Chloe's household, that there are strifes among you. What I mean is this: that each one of you says, I am of Paul, but I of Apollos, but I of Peter, but I of Christ. Christ is divided. Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest any one should

say that ye were baptized into my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides I know not whether I baptized any other. . . . When one saith I am of Paul, but another I am of Apollos, are you not acting in a very human fashion? ¹ What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom ye became believers. And each served as the Lord gave him the ability. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. But he that planteth and he that watereth are one, and each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God. God's husbandry, God's building are ye. . . . Therefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Peter, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." ²

The reader has but to substitute the names of Luther, Calvin, and Wesley for the names of Paul, Apollos, and Peter, and this trenchant rebuke and earnest appeal would be literally as applicable to the Church in the nineteenth century as in the first. How then would Paul meet these sectarian divisions with the sectarian names,—

¹ The best reading is *ἄνθρωποι*, not *σαρκικοί*, "Are ye not men?" not, "Are ye not carnal?" but the phrase is to be interpreted by the parallel passage in the preceding verse (1 Cor. iii. 3): "Are ye not walking after the manner of men?"

² 1 Cor. i. 10-16; iii. 4-9, 21-23.

Lutherans, Calvinists, Wesleyans ? How did he meet them in his own time?

He would not meet them by either one of the four methods which have been proposed in our modern times as a cure for sectarianism, — a mutual agreement to accept as the basis of union the Bible, a Church order, the Church sacraments, or a common creed ; certainly it was not by either of these methods that he proposed to the Corinthians to cure their dissensions.

He did not propose and could not have proposed the acceptance of the Bible as the foundation of ecclesiastical unity, for the Bible did not exist. The Old Testament existed, but he could not have called upon them to unite upon the Old Testament, because he said over and over again in his Letters that Christians were not bound by the laws of the Old Testament ; they were freed from the law. And the law constituted a large part of the Old Testament. He could not, therefore, have united them on the basis of their acceptance of the Old Testament as a final and absolute authority. And he certainly could not have united them on the acceptance of the New Testament as a final and absolute authority, for the New Testament did not exist. He was himself, in this very letter, writing a part of the New Testament. Its books were not brought together in one collection, whose authority was recognized by the Church, until the second or third century. In truth, the notion that the Church is or can be founded on the Bible is a curious in-

version of the perfectly well-known historical order. The Jewish Church, if not founded by Abraham,¹ certainly existed as a definite ecclesiastical organization in the time of Moses; but the Old Testament in its present form was not completed till over a thousand years later. In a similar manner, the Christian Church was brought into existence at Pentecost, if not before; but the New Testament, as we now have it, was certainly not completed until the end of the first century or early in the second. The Bible is the creation of the Church, and therefore the Church cannot be founded on the Bible. The basis of the Church cannot be the literature which its own life has created.

Nor did Paul make the unity of the Church depend upon acceptance of any particular form of ecclesiastical organization. Neither here nor anywhere else does he lay stress upon the supremacy and authority of either Peter or the Twelve. It is impossible to reconcile his utterances with the idea that he recognized any such supremacy and authority. He habitually claimed to be an apostle, the equal of the other apostles, and to bear the witness of his apostleship not in any ordination by other apostles, but in the spiritual fruits of his work and thus the ratification of his apostleship by the Spirit of God.² Not once does he directly appeal to the

¹ As Dean Stanley regards it in his *History of the Jewish Church*.

² Rom. xi. 13; 1 Cor. i. 1; ix. 1-2; Gal. i. 1, 19-22; ii. 4-6, 11; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 7; Titus i. 1.

apostles for decision on a doubtful question ; and in the one case in which an appeal is made to apostles and others in Jerusalem, he declares that he would not have accepted their decision had it been adverse to the doctrine of liberty ; and such decision as they reached he speedily though quietly disregarded.¹ He does not suggest to the rival factions at Corinth that they submit their differences to any ecclesiastical authority. He does not refer them to Peter, or to the apostolic college, or to a presbytery, or an assembly, or to a special council to be called for the purpose. He does not advise them to unite in any existing form of ecclesiastical organization, — papal, episcopal, or presbyterian. Indeed, if I have correctly traced the growth of the Church as an organization,² he could not have done so. For neither papal, apostolic, or presbyterian authority existed. There was as yet neither pope, bishopric, synod, or general assembly. Different churches were organized on different models in different localities. The form of organization is the mechanism which life uses in its work ; and the unity of life cannot be based upon the mechanism which it uses.

Paul might, perhaps, have made a common acceptance of the sacraments a basis of union, for they were doubtless in common use ; but he did not do so. One might as well base the unity of the home as the unity of the Church upon a common meal.

¹ Gal. i. 9-12. Comp. Acts xv. 28, 29 with 1 Cor. viii. 4-8.

² See chapter iv.

Certainly Paul does not propose any such foundation. He does not mention the Lord's Supper in this connection at all, and though he mentions baptism, it is to dismiss it as a matter of wholly secondary importance. "I thank God," he says, "that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any one should say that I baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas. Besides I know not that I baptized any other; for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." It is scarcely possible to conceive that the writer of this sentence, after treating baptism, in whatever form, in so cavalier a fashion, would have made acceptance of a particular form of administering baptism a condition of church union.

Certainly Paul did not attempt to secure Christian union by uniting these factions in agreement upon a common philosophy of religion, or a common symbol as an expression of such philosophy. If the Bible is the child of the Church, the creed is more evidently its child. It is what the Church has come to think as the result, in part at least, of a study of the Bible. If unity must be based upon the creed, then unity was not possible till the third or fourth century, for not till then did the Church have any creed, even the simplest. It was at first too busy living to philosophize about its life. And in this very letter to the Corinthians Paul explicitly disavows the notion that the Church can be built upon philosophy, as though it were only a new

school, with a new theory of life. He argues at length that philosophic definitions of religious truth afford no basis for Christian union. What he calls "wisdom" we might without misinterpretation call scholastic philosophy. The "wisdom" which the Greeks sought after was the philosophic formulation of all truth, and the whole of the second chapter is taken up with showing that spiritual truth cannot be adequately rationalized, that it transcends intellectual definitions. It is not, he says, with wisdom of words or excellency of speech—not, that is, by a philosophy or a skillful phrasing of philosophy in a common symbol—that the Church can ever be made one. History abundantly confirms his argument that theology affords no basis for Christian union. The creeds have been wedges to split the Church asunder, not bands to bind it together. If we except the Apostles' Creed, their object has been not to include all disciples of Christ but to exclude some who at least called themselves disciples. Thus the Nicene Creed was framed to exclude Arians, the Heidelberg Catechism to exclude Romanists, the Westminster Confession to exclude Arminians, and the Creed of Pius IV. to exclude Protestants. The object of the creed maker has been to frame a shibboleth which the supposed heretic could by no possibility pronounce. It has been exclusive, not inclusive.

Finally, Paul would not say, as sometimes is said in our time, that denominations are a blessing,

and that we must have Congregational and Baptist and Methodist and Episcopal and Presbyterian and Roman Catholic bodies, to the number of a hundred and twenty-five or a hundred and thirty separate and often rival and contending sects, besides independent congregations. This division of the Church into separate parties he vigorously condemns. It is the result, he says, of earthliness; it is produced by envy; it leads to strife. By such sectarianism Christ is divided. The human leader is treated as though he were the Master who had been crucified for the world. The body of Christ must not be divided; it must not be rent in sunder; there must not be in it factions and parties.

Paul's remedy for sectarianism, his basis of Church union, is very simple, far simpler than any of those which modern reformers have proposed. There is, he says, one foundation, Jesus Christ. Other foundation can no man lay. Loyalty to Christ, — not to a creed about Christ, not to a sacrament in honor of Christ, not to a Church which Christ has founded, not to a Book which tells about Christ, but loyalty to Christ himself, is the basis, and the only basis of union which Paul recognizes. "I beseech you, brethren," he says, "by the name [that is, with the authority] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you, but that ye be perfectly united in the same mind and in the same purpose: . . . that ye speak the

same thing," — you have one message to give ; it is the message of a Christ who came into the world, lived, suffered, died, rose from the dead, will come again. Give that message. " Be perfectly joined together in the same mind " — perceive him, see him, understand him, let your perception of him, your understanding of him, unite you ; and " in the same judgment," — the same fundamental purpose, the bringing of the kingdom of Christ upon the earth ; thus " bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." ¹

Coöperation in Christian activity is Paul's remedy for schism and sectarianism in the Church of Christ. This simple proposition is confirmed by certain modern experiments in the Church : by the coöperation of Christian missionaries of different denominations in foreign lands ; by the endeavor, unhappily frustrated, of the Japanese Christians to make one Japanese Christian Church ; by the practical unity of widely differing Christians for Christian service in such organizations as the Young Men's Christian Associations, the Young Women's Christian Associations, the King's Daughters, and the Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavor. In all these cases there is a general acceptance of the Bible as containing the word of God, but there is generally no agreement upon either doctrinal statements, church symbols, or ecclesiastical government ; and yet while others have debated Christian union, these organizations,

¹ 1 Cor. i. 10 ; 2 Cor. x. 5.

acting on the counsel and in the spirit of Paul, have secured it. On the other hand Church history abundantly illustrates the hopelessness of attempting to secure ecclesiastical union by the other and more formal methods. The Church of Rome, founded on Papal authority, has been rent by factions quite as bitter as any that have split Protestantism into contending sects. Protestantism, based on the acceptance of the Bible as a final authority, has not been protected thereby from being broken into scores of sects. All Protestant Churches accept the two Sacraments, but this has proved no effective bond of union. And as to the creed, the fact that there are in Scotland half a dozen Presbyterian denominations, all accepting the same creed and each independent of the other, proves, if proof were necessary, how utterly hopeless it is to attempt to build Church unity on acceptance of a common symbol.¹

THE IMMORALITIES IN THE CHURCH

Gross immoralities had entered the Christian church in Corinth. They had been fostered by

¹ It does not come within the province of this chapter, which is simply interpretation of Paul's Letters, to discuss the question whether organic union of all Christian churches in one ecclesiastical body is either practicable or desirable. It is enough to point out that (according to Paul) the basis of unity must be spiritual, not ecclesiastical, literary, liturgical, or theological. Therefore mutual respect for each other's ecclesiastical, literary, liturgical and theological conception must precede organic union or even efficient coöperation.

that spirit which in Greece, but by no means confined to Greece, dissociated ethical principles from religion. The object of pagan religion in Greece and Rome was not to make men better. Indeed, it may be said, almost without exception, that the object of pagan religion has never been to make men better. It has generally been either to placate an angry God or to bribe a corrupt one; and the angry God must be placated, and the corrupt one bribed, without regard to the moral character of the worshiper. Thus the forms of pagan worship have generally been, not only dissociated from morality, but often themselves grossly immoral. The worship of Ashtoreth among the Phœnicians, and of Astarte among the Greeks and Romans, was accompanied with immoralities so gross that they cannot even be mentioned in modern literature. These gross immoralities connected with the pagan temples and worship of Corinth had crept into the Christian Church. The arguments for them were such as have been often heard since: The body is a mere transient dwelling-place; the man is not soiled because the body is soiled; a white soul may live in an evil body. As a man is not made leprous because the house is leprous, so he is not made leprous because his body is leprous. That was the argument then, and it has been often repeated since. Something nearly approximating it has been taught by representatives of pagan religions, impliedly if not explicitly, in American cities within our own times.

The apologists for immorality cited Paul himself. Christianity, they said, is freedom; we are free from the law; therefore there is no longer any law; Thou shalt not steal, and Thou shalt not commit adultery, are abolished; we are free to do what we will. A similar separation of religion and morality has been not uncommon in later history. An ancient record thus characterizes Cardinal Lorraine, of France: "He is not much beloved; he is far from truthful; he is naturally deceitful and covetous, but he is full of religion." And there is no reason to think that the chronicler intended a satire. Criminals have sometimes been excessively religious, if religion consists, not in doing righteously, as the only method of being acceptable to a righteous God, but in paying devotions to a God who cares not for character so long as he receives what is due to himself.

Paul meets this incursion of immorality into the Christian Church with fiery indignation. He never suggests that the Church shall excommunicate a man for false opinion, for heresy, for untrue creed, nor even for schism and self-separation from the Church. He never suggests that any one be excommunicated because he does not agree with his brethren on a doubtful question of ethics. The followers of Paul and the followers of Peter, the men who eat meat offered to idols, and the men who think it wicked to do so, are to live together in fellowship in the same Christian Church. But he who is openly and frankly immoral Paul insists

shall be at once excommunicated. "Are ye not aware," he says, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" A little corruption in the Church is sufficient to taint the whole body. "You are not," he says, "to keep company with fornicators : with such an one not even to eat." Yet even in this indignation he illustrates that practical common sense which in this extraordinary man is so singularly intermingled with his uncompromising fidelity to principle. You are not, he says, "to separate yourself under all circumstances from all evil doers ; in that case you would have to go out of the world. But if one of your brethren gives himself up to vicious life he is no more worthy to be called a brother ; you may eat with the heathen,¹ but with such a *pseudo* Christian as this you are not to eat."

"I wrote unto you in that letter² not to keep company with fornicators. Not that you should altogether separate yourselves from the fornicators of this world, or the greedy of gain, or the extortioners, or the idolaters ; for in that case you must needs go out of the world. But my meaning was that you were not to keep company if any one who is called a brother is a fornicator, or greedy of gain, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one you are not even to eat."³

¹ Gal. ii. 11-14.

² "Not this present epistle, . . . but a former epistle which has not come down to us." — Alford *in loco*.

³ 1 Cor. v. 9-11.

SOME PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

Paul next comes to certain questions which have been asked him. The first of these relates to marriage.

In reading what Paul says about marriage we must remember two things. Marriage in that age was very different from marriage in ours. There was no religious ceremony and no enduring bond. Under the Roman Empire, in the first century, the man and woman entered into partnership, lived together as long as both of them liked to live together, and then separated. The bond could be dissolved at the pleasure of either one. How readily it was dissolved is illustrated by an instance related by St. Jerome, who tells us that in his time "there existed a wife who was married to her twenty-third husband, she herself being his twenty-first wife."¹ When, therefore, Paul talks about marriage, he talks about the advisability of a woman's entering into such a commercial and easily dissoluble relationship with some man — something very different from marriage in a Christian community as it exists under the influence of Anglo-Saxon civilization and Christian teaching. We must remember, too, that Paul, when he wrote this letter to the Corinthians, believed that the world was soon to come to an end; that there would be great distress, and many persecutions; that the perils to the Church

¹ Lecky's *European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 325. He furnishes also other striking illustrations of the effect of this liberty of divorce.

were likely to grow greater rather than less; and that thus the condition of the times rendered marriage, especially to the Christian, inexpedient. His advice, which is, on the whole, against marriage rather than in favor of it, is such as a Puritan might have given in the time of Charles the First, or a Huguenot in the time of Catherine de Medici. His judgment in favor of virginity is based on the fact of "the present distress." Upon the other question, whether the Christian husband is to put away his pagan wife, or the pagan wife the Christian husband, he is more explicit. Ezra, five hundred years before, had required the people to put away their pagan wives.¹ Paul discards this precedent without even referring to it. "Unto the married," he says, "I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband, . . . and let not the husband put away his wife." His authority is the explicit teaching of the Master: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."²

The second question asked of Paul relates to meat offered to idols. The worship of idols was a sacrificial worship. Cattle were offered in great numbers on pagan altars. The blood having been

¹ Ezra x. 10-17.

² 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11; Matt. xix. 9. I see no reason for thinking that the phrase "not I, but the Lord," indicates a special revelation to Paul. It is his recognition of the authority of the teaching of Christ on this subject, which he had learned either by tradition or through one of the Gospels already written.

poured out as a libation to the gods, the meat was afterwards sold in open market, presumably for the benefit of the priesthood and the temple service. The Jews thought that, by eating meat which had once been offered to idols, they participated in the idolatrous worship; and the Jewish Christians held the same view. The Gentile Christians, on the other hand, saw no harm in buying and eating such meat as they had always been accustomed to do. They even seem sometimes to have eaten in the idolatrous temple, thus sharing in the pagan and semi-religious feasts.¹ The question was addressed to Paul, May we eat meat offered to idols? In reply he declares that an idol is nothing in the world. There is none other God but one. Meat offered to an idol is offered to a nonentity. You are as free to eat such meat as to eat any other.² In estimating the radicalism of this utterance, the reader must remember that no less a body than the Council at Jerusalem had issued a formal resolution counseling Christians to "abstain from meats offered to idols and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."³ They had thus treated the ceremonial and the moral obligations of Moses as of equal force. Paul quietly, though without referring to it, sets this resolution of the Ecclesiastical Council at Jerusalem one side, and, having vigorously condemned the fornicator, declares that meat is not polluted because the animal from which it is taken has first been sacrificed in a

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 10.² 1 Cor. viii. 4.³ Acts xv. 28.

pagan temple. But, he goes on to say, All men will not understand this principle, nor recognize it. Some will think it is wrong to eat such meat, and if they think it is wrong, to them it will be wrong. For it is always wrong to violate one's conscience in order to indulge one's appetite. Therefore do not eat if by so doing you will entice others less intelligent than yourself to violate their consciences. And he declares for himself, "If food entices my brother into sin, I will eat no flesh throughout all time, lest I entice my brother into sin."¹

There are no more idols, and the Christian is no more perplexed respecting meat offered in sacrifice; but there is perhaps no text in the Bible more frequently quoted or more often misused than the famous text just quoted. It cannot be taken out of its relation to what has gone before, without being misinterpreted and misapplied. Two principles Paul lays down; and the second is dependent upon the first. The first is liberty; the second is service. He puts them together clearly in Galatians: "Ye are called unto liberty, brethren; only use not your liberty for an opportunity to serve the flesh, but by love serve one another."² One may not select one of these principles and reject the other, and think that he has Paul as an authority. He cannot say, I am a free man; I may do what I like, no matter how it affects others. Neither can he say, No man may do what he likes, because I think it will injure

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 13.

² Gal. v. 13.

another. The one interpretation is as false as the other. The fundamental principle is this : Every man has conscience given him to be his own law-giver ; not to be a lawgiver for his neighbor. He has no right to lay down the law for another ; but the liberty which his conscience allows to him he must use in the spirit of love to others. The Christian is indeed urged by Paul to surrender his liberty for the sake of his weaker brother, but he cannot surrender what he does not possess. If, for example, he is not free to drink a glass of wine, he has no power to surrender his freedom to drink a glass of wine. Freedom is essential to temperance, for temperance is self-control, and if one is not allowed to control himself, he cannot be truly temperate. He cannot be controlled by another and exercise self-control at the same time and in respect to the same subject matter. A convict in the State prison, while he is under the control of the warden and his food is measured out to him, may be undergoing a training which will prepare him to exercise temperance when he is discharged ; but while he is in the prison he cannot exercise temperance, because temperance is *self*-control, and he is not allowed to control himself.

These two principles, liberty and service, are of universal application. When, as in our times, men, sometimes individually and sometimes collectively, through resolutions, platform addresses, and public journals supposedly edited in the interest of

public morality, deny the liberty of the individual to determine for himself the principles of his own action and the methods of his own conduct, the first duty of the Church is to reaffirm with vigor and courage the Pauline principle of freedom.

Law, that is, the collective action of the majority in a democratic community, may, and often must, prevent the individual from acts which interfere with the rights of his neighbor. But it may not interfere with the individual's liberty to follow the dictates of his own conscience in those matters which do not violate the rights of others. May I go to the theatre? may I drink wine? may I play cards? may I walk, or ride, or sail, or call, or play games on the Sabbath? The first answer to these and all kindred questions is, Each individual must decide for himself. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth."¹ If there ever was a community in which the restrictions of law imposed from without were necessary, it was Corinth — the corruptest city of the corruptest state in its corruptest epoch. If there ever was a church which the religious teacher should surround with restrictions and prohibitions, to which he should have said, There are some places to which you must not go, some beverages you must not drink, some pictures you must not look at, some teachers you must not listen to, it was the infant church at

¹ 1 Rom. xiv. 4.

Corinth. But Paul does not attempt thus to hedge them about with prohibitions. On the contrary, it is to the Corinthians he says, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Peter, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."¹ And this he says in the same letter in which he condemns them for dividing into parties, and following severally Paul and Apollos and Peter, and in which he condemns them for acquiescing in and countenancing, in one of their members, gross immorality. So Tertullian, when asked, May we visit the pagan theatres? replied, "Places do not contaminate, but what is done in the places." So Gregory the Great told Augustine, missionary to Canterbury, not to destroy the pagan temples, but to consecrate them. So John Wesley said, "The devil has had the good music long enough."² The method of Paul is consecration, not restriction; the liberty of love, not bondage to another man's conscience.³

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

² Stanley's *Commentary on Corinthians*, p. 176.

³ The political right of the community to regulate the keeping and sale of dangerous articles of commerce, such as gunpowder or dynamite, or poisons such as arsenic or prussic acid (and alcohol may be, and by some is, included in the list of dangerous poisons), is not inconsistent with the liberty of the individual, which is always subordinate to the safety of the community. This right of the State rests on the same principle as its right to take the property of the citizen in taxation, though for expenditure which he does not believe in, or to draft him for service in war.

But the exercise of this liberty is always to be subordinated to the higher law of love. The fundamental question for every Christian to ask himself is, How can I best serve the world?—that is, his world. He cannot serve it at all unless he is a free man. He will not serve it at all unless he uses this freedom in the spirit of love. He must be equally ready to employ his liberty for love, and to forego it for love. If he believes the glass of wine, the game of cards, attendance at the theatre, Sunday recreation, will be innocent, harmless, even beneficial for himself, he has not yet given to his question a Christian answer. He must also ask and answer the question what the effect of his proposed act will be upon others. Sometimes he can serve others best by using his liberty, and teaching them that the Christian is free. Sometimes he can serve others best by foregoing his liberty, and teaching others that the Christian rejoices in self-limitation and self-sacrifice. In which way he can serve his brother, whether by using or by foregoing his liberty, is a question which each individual must decide for himself in each case as it arises. Though Paul said, “If food entices my brother into sin, I will eat no flesh,” I doubt very much that he was all his life a vegetarian.

The third question specifically addressed to Paul respected the relation of women to the Church, and their place and conduct in its worshiping assemblies. In the city of Corinth the women of evil repute had liberty; women of good repute, none.

To go into a public assembly of any kind unveiled, and to take public part in it, was at once to mark the one who did it as a woman of the town. But Paul believed, and later certainly said, perhaps had already said in Corinth, that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female ; that woman also is God's child ; that where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ; that, therefore, there is liberty in the Church of Christ. Some women, availing themselves of this, had come into church assemblies unveiled, and had taken part in them, and were bringing evil reputation upon themselves and upon their church. Paul argues at length that the women should always wear their veils in the church assemblies, and should not speak in them.

“ But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ ; but the head of the woman is the man ; but the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head ; for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if a woman be not veiled, let her also be shorn : but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled. For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man was not created from the woman ; but the woman from the man. Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man. Therefore ought the woman to have upon her head the sign of her subjec-

tion, because of the angel witnesses.¹ Moreover neither is the woman to be accounted apart from the man, nor the man apart from the woman in the Lord. For as the woman was created from the man, so is the man also born of the woman; but all things are of God. Judge for yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man wears his hair long, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman wears her hair long, it is a glory to her; because long hair is given to her for a veil.”²

A little later in the same letter he adds: —

“Let your women keep silence in the public assemblies; for it is not permitted to them to talk, but they should keep themselves in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for women to speak in a public assembly.”³

This counsel is an excellent illustration of Paul's oratorical temperament. He desires to prevent women from taking such a course in the Christian assemblies in Corinth as will bring disgrace upon them and upon the church, and he uses those arguments which he thinks will appeal to them, and which are suggested to him by his rabbinical training. His conclusion is one of practical common sense. Some of his arguments, few, if any, Amer-

¹ This paraphrase expresses what appears to be the best interpretation of a confessedly enigmatical passage.

² 1 Cor. xi. 3-15.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. There is no doubt this was the fact in Corinth. Women of notorious reputation, and none other, were accustomed to take part in public discussions.

ican readers believe to be sound. They do not believe that woman was made for man. They believe that God made man, male and female, in his own image; not for woman man, more than for man woman; but each for the other, and both for God.

Self-reverent each, and reverencing each,
Distinctive individualities, but like each other,
Ev'n as those who love.

It is no longer true that it is a shame for a woman to be uncovered in church. Most preachers certainly would find the inspiration of their presence greatly lessened if the women auditors sat behind impenetrable veils. Whether there are angels looking on or not, it is not material to inquire. If we believe there are such unseen companions in our worship, their presence would be no reason why women should wear veils. And there is just as little reason for insisting that women may not speak in church meetings because they could not do so with propriety in Corinth, as there is for insisting that all women in a Christian congregation shall go veiled in Oriental fashion because in the first century and in the city of Corinth the absence of the veil was a symbol of disgrace.

The subject of spiritual gifts and of the resurrection I reserve for the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS (CONTINUED)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

THERE were in the church at Corinth men possessing or claiming to possess extraordinary gifts, and there was an emulation, not wholly divine, between these men. Paul gives us in the twelfth chapter a catalogue of these gifts. They are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, various tongues, interpretation of tongues. Of these gifts we readily recognize five as existing in the Christian Church to the present day — wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophecy, and discernment of spirits: wisdom, or the logical or philosophical faculty, which belongs to what we might call the rational element in the Church; knowledge, or the intuitive perception, which directly and immediately perceives the higher and diviner forms of truth; faith, or the spiritual imagination, by which men behold the invisible world and walk as on mountain-tops in the clear light of heaven; prophecy, or that kind of eloquence by which one with great spiritual passion moves on the hearts and emotions of men — what

we sometimes call spiritual magnetism ; and discernment of spirits, or good common sense discriminating between different teachers and different types of teaching.

These various forms of gift are not uncommon in our times, and those who possess them not infrequently look down upon those who possess a different form from their own. Thus, the philosophical mind is apt to look with disregard upon the intuitive, and the intuitive upon the rational or philosophical, while both of them call the man who walks by faith a mystic ; the mystic is more humble than a great many mystics are if he does not disesteem the man who walks by philosophy and reason ; and the discerner of spirits — that is, the man of practical common sense — does not always discern charitably or judge wisely.

But there are gifts in Paul's catalogue which have no parallel in our own time, even if they have an analogue. Of the healing, we might say, perhaps, that there is an analogy to be found in the claims of Christian Scientists and Faith Curers to cure physical disorder through purely spiritual means. Of the gift of tongues, we may certainly say that there is an analogue to be found in the claims of the Catholic Apostolic Church, more popularly known as the Irvingites, who professed to exercise exactly this faculty of speaking in unknown tongues. But, for the most part, in orthodox or evangelical churches of every branch, there is neither a claim to heal physical disorder by spiritual

means nor to speak in unknown tongues. How are we to regard these so-called gifts? Are we to think of them as really manifestations of a Divine Spirit? as belonging to that early age, because the early age had not yet drifted away from the touch of Christ? Are we to think that in the Apostolic Church there were powers which since have died out from the Church — powers which it has since lost? There are some objections to this, which is the current view; for it is to be observed that these gifts of healing and of tongues do not appear to have existed, to any considerable extent, outside the church at Corinth. We should naturally look for them where the spirit of God was the strongest, where the life was the purest, where the faith was the clearest — that is, at Philippi or Ephesus, rather than in the church at Corinth, which was the one in which there was the greatest departure from purity of faith, the greatest sign of human deficiency and imperfection; Corinth, into which error and heresy and strife and immorality had entered. Moreover, we find Paul speaking with greater freedom of some of these gifts than we should expect him to do if he regarded them as signs of the Divine Spirit. “I would rather,” he says in substance, “say five words that others can understand than ten thousand words that others cannot understand.”¹ Are we, then, to consider

¹ True, he also says, “I thank God I speak with tongues more than ye all;” but this must be interpreted as equivalent to I have the gift and could exercise it if I chose. See Alford on 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

these gifts of tongues and of healing as evidences of superstition? Do they belong to a credulous age and a degraded church? Possibly. And yet there are difficulties in this view; for Paul treats them as gifts of the Spirit of God; he commends them in some measure; and he urges his readers to strive for the best and highest attainments in these gifts.

I am inclined to think that the truth lies midway between these two views and embraces them both. Any state of great spiritual exaltation is liable to be accompanied with great excesses, and more liable in an ignorant than in an educated community. The phenomena which attend revival meetings among the colored people in the South, and have attended revival meetings in the West, especially in the earlier years of our nation's history, are not wholly vicious, and certainly are not wholly virtuous. They are indications of a great excitement in which the sensuous and the spiritual are strangely intermingled. We sometimes wish, perhaps, that the world were differently constructed, that all the virtues were in one utensil and all the vices in another. But, in fact, the good and the evil are strangely intermixed in every society and in every man; and if the evil are not as black as they are painted, neither are the good as white as they are painted. Most men are gray, or black and white in alternation. And as it is with the individual, so has it always been in society — the truth and the error intertwined; in

times of great religious excitement the religious fervor and the superstitious passion intertwined. So I accept neither the explanation which regards these gifts as purely a manifestation of a Divine Spirit, nor that which regards them as simply a manifestation of a superstitious age, but rather that explanation which regards them as the manifestation of a spiritual excitement in a superstitious age. It is not, however, necessary to answer this question positively in order to ascertain the principles which Paul applies, and to apply them ourselves in the solution of our own problems.

He says, in the first place, that no man can call Jesus accursed by the Spirit of God. That seems, at first, a needless remark, and yet we must remember that Paul himself had thought God had put the mark of curse on Christ by allowing him to be crucified. That was before Paul's conversion; but at a later epoch in the Church there were Christians who still entertained that view. They held that the Spirit of God entered into Christ at baptism, because it could not be thought that the Son of God should grow from childhood, and that the Spirit departed from him on the cross when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" because it could not be thought that the Son of God could die. So, on the one hand, the Son of God did not grow from boyhood to manhood, and, on the other hand, the Son of God was not put to death by the hands of man. Paul says, first, that nothing can be truly spiritual

which does not conform to and interpret the character and the career of Christ from the manger to the cross. Any doctrine which tends to take men away from Christ, to make them think less of Christ, to cause them to substitute something in the place of Christ, may at once be discarded by the Christian without further argument. The principle may be applied to certain forms of so-called religious instruction in our own time — such, for example, as the popular forms of theosophy, which are taking men away from Christ to something other than Christ.

The second test Paul applies is profitableness. If the gift is not of use, it is to be discarded. He applies this at some length, in his argument respecting the gift of tongues. It is clear from Paul's argument in this Epistle that the speaking in tongues was not a speaking to men of different races in their different languages for missionary purposes. There was, indeed, no need of that in Corinth, for all the people in Corinth spoke the one Greek language and understood it; and although there were different dialects in Greek, they were not so different in a city like Corinth that a missionary must be supernaturally endowed with power to speak in a tongue which otherwise he must have laboriously acquired by study. Paul's argument shows that this talking with tongues was a kind of babbling, a talking without meaning or significance, the parallel to which is to be found in the inarticulate cries which sometimes accompany

what certain persons call "getting religion." Paul says this cannot be of any use to any one; the gift, to be of value, must be profitable.

His third principle is that useful gifts are not mutually exclusive, nor competitive, but coöperative. Society is like a human body. It has what we now call solidarity. It is not merely a mass of individual units; it is itself a unit; but made up of different members with different functions. As the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, are all necessary for the one body, so all the varied gifts of life are necessary for the one church. We are to recognize variety of function, and at the same time the unity of organism. Count Tolstoi urges that every man should fulfill all functions — work with his brain in the morning, and cobble shoes in the afternoon. The result would probably be that both the shoes would be poorly cobbled and the brain work inadequately done. Certainly Tolstoi's is not Paul's plan. He said, Let the foot be a foot, and the eye an eye, and the hand a hand, but all united in their various functions to make the one organism. It is a prophet's perception of the great principle of "division of labor," only Paul puts it more wisely, more philosophically, and more truly than it is in that much-abused phrase.

His fourth principle is that this unity of organism is to be preserved in and through a variety of function by self-respect and mutual respect. "If the ear shall say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body?"

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling?" Every man is to respect his own vocation. If he is in a vocation which he can not respect, he should leave it. No man is to say, My calling is not a worthy calling. If it is a calling wherein he can serve society, it is a worthy calling. And every man is to respect his neighbor's calling. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the foot, I have no need of you." Society, government, the church, each is an organism; each made up of men with different gifts; each is to use his own gift for the service of humanity; each to respect his own gift; each to respect his neighbor's gift; and in this self-respect and this mutual respect in and through the variety of function the unity of the organism is to be maintained. And so from a study of the strife and jealousies in the Corinthian church Paul educes his psalm to love: —

"Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all miracle-workers? Are all faith-healers? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And yet I show you a way which excels all others.

"If I should speak with the tongues of men, and even of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I should have the gift of prophecy, and should know all the mysteries of God's councils, and should have universal knowledge;

and though I should have fullness of faith so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I should dole out in alms all my possessions, and though I should deliver up my body that I may receive the martyr's glory, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

"Love bears long with offenders, and is helpful ; love is not envious ; love does not show itself off ; does not bear itself proudly ; does not behave unbecomingly ; seeketh not her own things ; is not irritable ; does not keep account of the evil ; rejoices not in injustice, but rejoices with the truth ; silently endures all experiences ; trusts in them all, hopes in them all, is patient under them all.

"Love never loses its power. Are there prophecies, they shall be done away ; are there tongues, they shall cease ; is there knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know truth only in a fragment and we prophesy only in a fragment, but when the perfected life has come to us, that which has come in a fragment will be put away. When I was a little child, I spake like a little child, I felt like a little child, I reasoned like a little child. But now that I have become a man I have put away the ways of a little child. For now we see truth through a mirror, in enigmatical reflections, but then face to face ; now I know only in a fragment, then I shall know thoroughly, even also as I am known thoroughly. But even as things are, there abide faith, hope, love — these three. But the greatest of these is love." ¹

Luther said, "Thank God for my sins !" The

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 29-xiii. 13.

Church of Christ may almost thank God for the strifes and jealousies of the Corinthian church which occasioned Paul's psalm of love.

THE RESURRECTION.

The last subject which Paul treats in his first letter to the Corinthians is the resurrection.

There were at the time when Paul wrote, and perhaps it may be said there still are, four conceptions respecting the future life. The first is that at death, or after a succession of lives and deaths, the soul, completing the spiral of its existence, comes back into God again and is absorbed by him. The soul lives forever, only as the river lives in the ocean — that is, not at all. The second is that the soul lives in another body. When the man dies, the soul passes over into some other physical organism. There is what is known as the transmigration of souls, or reincarnation; a view which is now brought before us in America by the Theosophists. The third view is that the body itself is to be preserved, either by human care or by divine miracle. The Egyptians preserved it by human care, embalming it with the utmost caution; and from them we have inherited a little of that fashion, though we have abandoned the superstition which led to it. We seal the bodies of our dead, sometimes, in leaden caskets, trying to keep the mould and the corruption away, though we know it to be in vain. In the fourth place, there was the conception of the

Greeks and the Romans, that when the soul left the body it did not return to God or the gods, but lived in a vague, shadowy under-world, without organization, without real life. These four conceptions of the future there were: First, absorption into God; second, transmigration of souls, or living in another body; third, living in one's own body, embalmed for the purpose, or gathered from the four winds of heaven by a miracle at the resurrection, at the last day; and fourth, life in a disembodied state in a shadowy underworld.

Out of the resurrection of Christ there grew a fifth conception respecting the future life: a strong, firm belief in the personal resurrection and the personal immortal life of the dead, based upon and inspired by faith in the fact that Jesus Christ had died and had arisen again from the dead. But truth never makes its way in an atmosphere of error without difficulty; and the truth of a personal resurrection came, before long, to be doubted. Paul writes to correct this error. He argues the personal resurrection and personal immortality by these considerations: First, if the soul does not rise from the dead, then Christ has not risen. But we have borne our testimony to you that Christ has risen. If he has not risen we are false witnesses, and Christianity is a fraud. If the dead do not rise, if as individuals they do not live personally in another life, then your dead are perished, then it is not true that Christ will bring with him his beloved. If the dead do not

rise, if there is no resurrection, no personal immortality, then Christ has not the victory which he foretold when he said, The gates of hades shall not prevail against my Church.¹ For if his saints are kept perpetual prisoners in hades, the gates of hades do prevail against his Church; his promise is found false; he is defeated and God is defeated. Then, with an *argumentum ad hominem*, which Paul is not afraid or unwilling to use at times, he refers to a custom which we know existed later in the Church and which we may fairly presume had already begun to exist. When a man died unbaptized, his friends baptized the corpse, or sometimes vicariously some one for the corpse; and Paul says, If there is no resurrection for the dead, why do you baptize for your dead? Finally he meets an objection — an old one, a familiar one — “How shall the dead rise, and with what body shall they come?”

Many scholars have read the fifteenth chapter of the First Corinthians as an argument for the resurrection of the body. It seems to me clearly, explicitly, palpably, unmistakably, a cumulative argument against the resurrection of the body. Against those who thought that God would absorb individuals, Paul stands for personal immortality; against those who thought the body must be embalmed or the soul must find its resting-place in some other body, or the soul must live in a shadowy underworld without a body, he argues in the

¹ Matt. xvi. 18.

latter half of this chapter. "With what body shall they come?" This is his reply: You plant a seed in the ground. It dies. Nor will anything come from it unless it dies. But when something does come, it is not that which you put in the ground. The same life which was in the seed comes to the surface, but clad with a new body. God's resources are not so few as you imagine, if you think that he who has made this body cannot make another. There is one flesh of birds, another of cattle, another of fishes. There is one glory of the moon, another glory of the sun, another glory of the stars, and, moreover, star differeth from star in glory. And so shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. That which thou sowest is a mere seed; that which rises has a new glory of its own. If there is a natural body adapted to the needs of this life, that is itself a reason for believing that there is another, a spiritual body, adapted to the needs of the other life. Christ came to earth. Did he bring a body with him? In what body did he live before he came to earth? Was he then disembodied, a shadowy creature in an underworld, lamenting his state, as the Greeks and Romans thought their heroes were? Was he wandering over the globe, transmigrating from body to body, as the Hindus think their dead were? Was he waiting for some body to be prepared for him, that he might come into the fullness of life? If it were possible for the body of flesh to rise, it would do no good. If God were to bring together

from all the quarters of the globe all fragments of the body, it would serve no purpose ; for flesh and blood can never inherit the kingdom of God, since that which is essentially corrupt cannot inherit the incorruptible, nor that which from the moment of its birth begins to die inherit the immortal. Even we that are living when the trump shall sound cannot enter the kingdom of God with our bodies. There must be a new organism and a new habitation for a new life. In this is Christ's supreme victory. For now we see that death is no destruction. Now we see that the end of death is not the perishing of the seed in the ground. The end of death is the uprising of a new and larger life. Death no longer conquers. Death no longer has a victory ? Death no longer even pricks as the sting of a wasp. Death is deprived of its sting ? Death is the advent to a larger life, and God shall clothe that life with glory, as it pleaseth him. Read Paul's argument in his own words, and see whether I have misinterpreted it : —

“ But some one will say, How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come ? Foolish fellow ! That which thou thyself sowest is not made to live except it die ; and that which thou sowest is not the body which is to be, but a mere seed, as, for example, a seed of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as it pleases him ; and to each of the seeds its own body. Not all flesh is the same flesh ; but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes. There are also heavenly

bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the heavenly is one, the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars — for star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first Adam became a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God — neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For it is necessary that this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. When this corruption has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is thy victory? Where, O death, is thy sting? The sting of death is sin, but the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord

Jesus Christ. So, then, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”¹

If the New Testament means to teach the resurrection of the body, if Paul means to teach that doctrine, it is very strange that the phrase itself never occurs in the New Testament. The notion that the body which is laid in the grave must rise again in order to preserve personal immortality is the relic of a paganism which ought long since to have been forgotten. The body that lies in the grave will rise in grass and flowers only. Nor are our beloved to wait until some far-off time, while their bodies sleep beneath the sod and the cold winds play and the cold rain beats upon their bed. Nor do they wait in some shadowy underworld until the time of their redemption. To die is to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Every death is a resurrection; and the mother who stands looking down into the grave and hearing the clod falling upon the coffin should turn and lift her eyes and see the loved one at her side trying to caress her. For she should know, not that there will be, but that there is, a spiritual body, and that the last gasp on earth is contemporaneous with the first great inhalation of a new and spiritual life in the celestial sphere.²

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 35-58.

² No one of the lectures, as originally given, which have formed the material out of which this book is composed, gave rise to more questionings than this one on Paul's doctrine of the

resurrection. To go into the whole subject of even the Bible teaching concerning immortality and the resurrection would take me too far from the object of this volume, which is simply to interpret Paul's Letters. It must suffice to say here, very briefly, that in my judgment there is no one uniform teaching on this subject by the Biblical writers. The conception of immortality grew up gradually among the Hebrews as among other peoples; the earlier Hebrews had little or no conception of immortality; the later Hebrews entertained substantially the same conception as that of the Greeks — a vague ill-defined notion of a dark underworld, a Sheol or Hades, where the dead maintained a disembodied and impalpable existence; the Pharisees in Paul's time generally expected for the devout a resurrection from Sheol simultaneously with the advent of the Messiah, and this was probably Paul's earlier view. Christ taught his disciples a different faith; he told them that this world was not the only dwelling place of life, that in his Father's house, the universe, were many dwelling places, that he was going to his Father and that they should come to him to dwell with him and with his Father, and share their glory; that his disciples could be kept in no underworld, that whoever lived and believed in him could not die but should live a continuous and unbroken life. Whether when he rose from the dead he came back and animated his physical body, and so revealed the continuity of his life to his disciples, or whether he appeared to them in a spiritual body, and their eyes were opened to discern him, is a question on which the cautious student will not speak with assurance, — though the former seems to me the more probable opinion. What we do know is that the continuity of his life was ocularly demonstrated to his disciples. Paul passed gradually from his Pharisaic to his later Christian conception of death and resurrection, as we all pass from the cruder to the higher and more spiritual conceptions of life; this transition in his faith accompanied the change of his faith from the expectation of a future Messiah coming in clouds and glory, to a perception of and rejoicing in a crucified Messiah as the power and the wisdom of God; and this fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians marks, more clearly than any other passage, his new faith in the continuity of the spiritual life and its independence of all physical conditions.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE overture to "Parsifal" contains the *motifs* which are afterward worked out in the opera. Like such an overture is the second of Paul's epistles to the Corinthians. It contains the *motifs* of his subsequent writing, the germs which he later develops. It is, indeed, hardly too much to say that the seeds of everything wrought out more fully in the epistles to the Galatians, the Romans, the Philippians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians, are to be found in this epistle. And yet they are simply seeds. They can hardly be called thoughts. This is of all the epistles the least theological, the least like a treatise, the least systematic. It has less than any other a topic. It is a letter of personal experiences.¹ If we might compare the other letters to sermons or addresses, we might compare this letter to the kind of address in which one gives his experience in a prayer-meeting.

And yet, it is for this very reason in some respects

¹ No other of Paul's letters is of equal importance to this second letter in its bearing on the history of his inner consciousness. Sabatier's *The Apostle Paul*, p. 165. Comp. Stanley on Corinthians, p. 345.

the most vital and the most interesting. Its fragmentary character, its seed-like character, adds to its value. For all vital theology is born of experience. The theology which a man works out in his study through books is of comparatively little use. The theology which has been wrought out of him by actual experience in life takes hold of men, because in such theology there is life. All the great theologians have thus been men of great experiences: Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Bushnell — in them all we can trace the secret of their thought in their lives.

It is true that, when we take up this Epistle to study it, we have to study it with comparatively little information respecting the outward experiences from which it was born. The student of Paul's life and epistles has to construct Paul's experiences somewhat as a skilled scientist constructs an ancient animal from two or three bones. So out of single phrases, almost out of single words, in this letter, scholars construct the experiences out of which it sprang.

(Paul has gone from Corinth to Ephesus. From Ephesus he has journeyed to Jerusalem. He has come back from Jerusalem to Ephesus again. He has made visits to the churches in Asia. Meanwhile he has had strange experiences at Ephesus — some of great exaltation, some of great depression. He was overworked at Ephesus. Luke has given us a picture of Paul's work in an address made to the elders of the city. He went from house to

house. He entreated men with tears. He labored by day and by night. And he added to his missionary labors toil with his own hands to eke out his inadequate income, for he would not be dependent on the churches. He has had wonderful success, and he has met with very great hostility. He has fought, he says, with the wild beasts at Ephesus, for to wild beasts he compares the mob which threatened his companions. In his journeyings, too, he has met with great perils, by land and by sea, from robbers and from storm. But, more than that, he has carried with him the care of the churches, which, he says, came upon him daily. Every new church is not a new support, but a new burden; and the heresies, the crudities of opinion, the immoralities of life, which are depicted with some fullness in the First Epistle to the Corinthians are reported to him from other churches also. He bears them all vicariously. "Who is weak," he says, "and I am not weak; who is tempted into sin, and I am not on fire!"¹

With these burdens of the churches and these external persecutions, he had also some physical deformity. We do not know what it was; we can only surmise. He calls it a thorn in the flesh. He says that with it Satan buffeted him. It was, or seemed to be, a hindrance to his work. Some have thought it an affection of the eyes, produced by the sudden glare of the light at the time of his conversion; some, his weak bodily presence, which

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 29.

stood in his way when he undertook to address audiences; some, a stammer or impediment in his speech, which he overcame with difficulty; some, a fever or other periodic disease. Whatever it was, it was an impediment, or seemed to him so to be, so great that he said, "I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me." By this he means not that he offered three prayers for its departure, but that three times in his experience he was confronted with it; three times it seemed to him almost like an insuperable obstacle; three times he wrestled in prayer with God that it might be taken away from him.¹

His adversaries cited the existence of this "thorn in the flesh" as an evidence of God's displeasure with Paul. The old Jewish law required the priest to be physically blameless, and Paul was not physically blameless, and the Jewish party cited this fact as an evidence that he was no true priest of God. Truth came to Paul by degrees, as it does to the rest of us, and through hard experience. So at last it dawned upon him that the weaker he was and the less able by any means of his own to produce great impression, the stronger was the testimony to the power of the truth and the greatness of the divine life of which he was the minister. And he says that when he discovered that, when he saw that in his weakness the greatness of God was glorified, when he saw that because of his stammering speech, his weak

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 1-10.

body, his defective vision, men could not say, "He magnetizes his audience by his eloquence," but must see that the power lay in the truth and not in the speaker — when he realized this, he gave thanks, and could glory in his tribulations, since by them he could glorify his Father. But he did not come to this conviction at first. Not only was he hindered by this physical defect, but he was very sick — so sick that he thought of himself as one under sentence of death, awaiting the executioner's sword. "I had," he said, "sentence of death within myself. My only hope for the future lay in a God who can raise even the dead to life again."¹

Oppressed, persecuted, burdened by the care of churches, overwrought and overworked, with this physical infirmity tripping him up and buffeting him, sick nigh unto death, there was brought to him by Titus further news from the church in Corinth. It was not altogether bad news. There had been a grossly immoral person in that church, and Paul had written with vigor that they should at once excommunicate him. They had not done so. There had been a battle over the question, and, apparently, what we should call a compromise had been reached. The church voted not to excommunicate this immoral person, but to censure him, and it had reached even this conclusion only by a majority.² Still Paul had accomplished his

¹ 2 Cor. i. 8, 9.

² Comp. 1 Cor. v. 3-5, 11, with 2 Cor. ii. 6; "sufficient for such an one was this reprimand inflicted by many."

real purpose ; the immoral person had repented of his immorality and come back into the church again, and the church had welcomed him, and Paul was glad that his advice was not too strictly followed. I forgive him, too, he says, so that he returns to a right and true life.¹ Paul had not a small nature. He was not ambitious of personal victory. When his counsel was not followed and better results were reached, he was still glad. His was no mean pride ; his pride was great, and great pride is good. It is only little pride that is evil.

But his enemies were still virulent. They declared that he had received no ordination ; Christ had not appointed him ; the Twelve had not appointed him ; he had no right to claim to be an apostle ; his witness was not true ; he had never seen Christ, he had never been with Christ, he knew nothing of Christ ; his preaching was not true ; he set the law aside ; his motives were not good ; he was a deceiver, a false prophet, a false teacher ; he was preaching the gospel in order that he might live by the gospel ; his motives were mean and sordid. Such were the accusations which his enemies in Corinth and elsewhere brought against him. And they claimed authority for their accusations. They produced letters.² Were these true

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

² The charges of Paul's enemies are deduced from his defence against them. See 2 Cor. i. 17, 18 ; iii. 1 ; v. 12, 13 ; x. 10, 11 ; xi. 6, 9, 12-14, 21-23 ; xii. 14, 19 ; xiii. 6.

or forged letters? There is some reason to think that they were not true. Did they come from Jerusalem? We do not know. But the presumption is that they purported to come from Palestine, if not from Jerusalem. Do I need letters? he says. Do I need to have any one vouch for me? You know me; you are my children; you were brought into the kingdom of God by my ministry; you are my letters, and I want no other than those which I have written in your own heart's experiences. To those I appeal. They are my authority.¹

Still, he was perplexed. I believe this is the only time in his life in which he shows indecision. At first he resolves that he will go to Corinth. He is indignant at these charges made against him, and he resolves that he will go and confront his enemies and put them down. In his wrath he starts on the journey; but after he has gone a little way he thinks better of it. It seems to him not well that he should go while he is in that state of mind; it will do more harm than good; and he abandons his proposed visit. Then it is brought as a new charge against him that he is weak and vacillating, that he makes great pretense in his letters, but when the time comes he fails in his promises and does not fulfill them.²

It is out of Paul's varied experiences, extending over a period of two or three years, that the Second Letter to the Corinthians is written. He

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 1-3.

² 2 Cor. i. 15-23; ii. 1, 2.

defends himself at length against the charges which have been preferred against him. He goes into autobiographical memorabilia, which I have briefly outlined and from which scholars have deduced some of these incidents in his experience. He urges on the church at Corinth that they take up a collection for the poorer Christians in Jerusalem. The church at Corinth was not a rich church, but still there were more people able to give in Corinth than in some other cities, and he urges that they take up a collection to be sent to the church at Jerusalem. If some of the letters written to undermine his authority were from Jerusalem, it was a noble and wise Christian method of meeting that attack to propose to carry back a contribution to the poor church at Jerusalem from the very church which the men in Jerusalem had been stirring up against him.

But the parts of his letter which will interest us the most are those parts in which, speaking from his own personal experiences, he deduces the truths which, in later epistles, he is to elaborate.

He has learned, in the only school in which we can learn that lesson, the power of God to comfort men in trouble, and how to comfort others in trouble.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ; who comforteth us in all our afflictions, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any affliction, by means of the comfort wherewith we ourselves are com-

forted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also, through Christ, our comfort aboundeth.”¹

Later we shall find in the eighth chapter of Romans this experience expanded into a doctrine. We shall find him stating how, waiting for the final redemption, he is able to glory in tribulation, knowing that nothing can separate him from the love of God. Meanwhile we learn where he gets this faith which is triumphant over sorrow and trouble. He gets it in the school of trouble. Persecuted, oppressed, overworked, sick, carrying the troubles of others in his own person, he learns how to share the sorrows of others; learns that when grief assails, it brings ordination with it. The way in which God ordains us to comfort our fellow-men is by our own affliction. Mourning is a priestly garment if we only knew it.

He has been assailed by the defenders and maintainers of the Jewish law, for maintaining that men are to be saved not by law, but by Christ. The time has been when he also was a maintainer of the Jewish law. Born and bred in the school of Pharisaism, he believed that the Jewish law was glorious and was final; and now he is attacked by those who hold the same Pharisaic faith — although they are in the Church of Christ; and who impugn his motives and attack his character and assail his doctrine, because he has departed from this Pharisaic faith in the integrity and greatness of law. To their attack he replies.

¹ 2 Cor. i. 3-5.

The law, he says, is glorious, but the law is transitory. Moses came down from the mount, his face aglow with the glory and presence of Jehovah, but when he finished speaking to the children of Israel he put a veil on his face and departed from them again into the mountain-top. To this incident Paul gives a new interpretation. Moses, he says, put the veil on his face that the people might not see the glory fade away therefrom, for the glory of Mount Sinai and the glory of the law fade away.¹ Men will never be made glorious by taking the law from Mount Sinai and shaping themselves according to it, but by another and very different fashion. We all, as from a mirror reflecting the image of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. It is by understanding Christ and by trying to repeat Christ to others — not, as the Old Version says, by “beholding as in a glass,” but, as the New Version, by “reflecting as a mirror” the glory of the Lord — that we are changed from glory to glory; not by shaping our life to conform to an external standard, nor by merely looking at it, but by receiving the splendor of the divine life, and repeating a reflection of that splendor to others.²

Has he done this? Paul, who is ready enough to defend himself against the charges of his enemies,

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 7-18. See Rev. Version for what seems to me the true rendering of this passage, though there is good authority for the rendering of the Old Version.

² 2 Cor. iii. 18.

is ready enough also to acknowledge the imperfection of his life. No, he has not done it. He does not truly reflect the glory of Christ ; he reflects it only from a dim and blurred mirror.

“For we proclaim not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord ; and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For it is God, he who said, Let the light shine out of the darkness, who has shined in our hearts, for the purpose of giving the illumination which comes from the recognition of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthenware utensils, that the preëminence of the power may be of God and not come from ourselves. On every side we are pressed, but we are not in straits ; perplexed, but not in despair ; hunted, but not abandoned ; struck down, but not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, in order that the life of Jesus might be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered unto death on account of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”¹

But although he does not reflect fully the glory of the Christ, still he looks upon him, he sees him, he appreciates him, he approximates him. And this is faith : to see the Christ, to appreciate him, to follow him, and to in any wise approximate him. Men have taunted him with his blindness, and he answers, It is true that this outward world is veiled from me, because I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. I look not at the things that are seen. But I see the more clearly the

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 5-11.

things that are unseen ; and the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal.¹ Later, one of Paul's disciples illustrates and interprets this declaration by what is the best definition of faith in the New Testament, and traces in a wonderful historical panorama the story of the saints of the olden time, who lived a noble life, because they looked at the things that are unseen and are eternal, not at the things that are seen and are temporal.²

This looking at the unseen world has wrought education in Paul. He has been nigh unto death, and no man of a serious temper can go down to the gates of death and look through the dark door and wonder what is the unknown beyond, and not have his life affected by the experience. Paul had been thus affected. He had been brought up in the Pharisaic faith that all men's bodies would wait in the grave until some general resurrection, their spirits meanwhile remaining in an intermediate state until the day of general resurrection, when the graves would open and the bodies would come forth and the spirits would be rehabilitated. But he had been down to the gates of death, and had looked through the mystic door into the unknown world beyond, and this hope in a general resurrection of the just and the unjust, in some far-off day, did not sustain him, any more than it sustained Martha and Mary to believe that their brother would rise in the general resurrection at the last

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 18.

² Hebrews xi.

day.¹ He has been living, too, in the spiritual world, and the body has seemed less and less to him and the spirit more and more, and the conception of death which he will hereafter carry with him is very different from that of his earlier Pharisaic faith.

“For we know that if our tabernacle-home upon this earth is dissolved, we have a structure from God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. Moreover in this earthly tabernacle we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our dwelling from heaven; seeing that we shall be found clothed and not naked. Moreover being in this tabernacle we groan, being burdened, not because we wish to be unclothed, but because we wish to be clothed upon, that what is subject to death may be swallowed up by life.”²

Never again shall we find Paul referring to any general resurrection at the last day. Never again shall we find Paul thinking of a day in which all the dead shall rise from their graves, and the sea shall give up its dead. No! hereafter for him death is swallowed up in life; dying is itself a resurrection; and to die is to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

But it is not on the future only he has looked by faith, but on the present also. He has been thinking more and more of the life of Christ, and his life has led him more and more into sympathy with the spirit of Christ, and he has come more and more to understand how it is that Christ will

¹ John xi. 24.

² 2 Cor. v. 1-4.

conquer the world. His enemies have said that he has never seen Christ, has never heard Christ teach, is no apostle. We learn, if we are wise, from our enemies. As Luther learned liberty from Romanism, and John Wesley from High Churchism, as Henry Ward Beecher learned love from law in Puritanism, and Horace Bushnell learned the power of vision from the rationalism of New England, so Paul learned the power of the gospel and the true character of Christ from the very men who assailed him. Even if we had known Christ after the flesh, he says, we should not now so know him.¹ We have come to understand him better. The spiritual vision is worth more than the material vision. The sight counts for nothing; the spiritual vision is the all in all. Paul does not wait for God to show himself by a revelation of a Messiah in a Second Coming. He sees that revelation in the Christ who has come.

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; not reckoning up their transgressions against them; and has laid upon us the message of reconciliation. We then are ambassadors for Christ. As though God spoke through us, we beseech in Christ’s stead: ‘Be ye reconciled to God.’ For him who knew no sin, he hath on our behalf made sin, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in him.”²

This is, I think, the first clear enunciation by Paul of the divinity in Jesus Christ; at all events,

¹ 2 Cor. v. 16.

² 2 Cor. v. 19-21.

none so clear as this before. And he will never lose it, never grow away from it. Clearer, plainer, certainly more elaborate statements of the person and work of Christ will follow it, but they will grow out of it.

But how shall this ministry of reconciliation be made effectual? In what way, by what process? There is but one way. It is by having the same passion for the truth which there was in Christ. Hereafter we shall find Paul dwelling on this: that he is to die with Christ in order that he may rise with Christ. We shall find Paul saying that he follows after, that he may know the sufferings of Christ and be conformed unto his death. We shall find him saying that through Christ the world is crucified to him and he to the world.¹ We shall find him entering into the passion of Christ, not that by the passion of Christ he may enter into a heavenly glory by and by, but because the passion of Christ is the glory of Christ, and no man shares the glory of Christ who does not share the passion of Christ's self-sacrificing love. This he expresses in these paradoxes of Christian experiences: —

“In all things, as ministers of God should, we recommend ourselves, — in much patience; in oppressions, in necessities, in straits, in stripes, in imprisonments, in dissensions, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; in purity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness on

¹ Gal. vi. 14.

the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers yet true, as unknown yet well-known, as dying, yet behold we live, as chastened, yet not killed, as sorrowful, but always rejoicing, as poor, but making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.”¹

He who was so poor that he knew not where to lay his head has diffused wealth throughout Christendom — making many rich! He who was so little known that no pagan history mentions his name has now a name that is above every name, at which every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father. By these facts we are to interpret these paradoxes of Paul: “As unknown, yet well known; as dying, yet behold we live; as poor, but making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.”

From this time we shall find in Paul only the growth of these seeds and germs of experience. We shall find him explaining in philosophic terms how one may have victory, not only over sorrow, but in sorrow; showing the futility of the law, and explaining the glory of the gospel; interpreting faith, and showing how the mere aspiration and desire after righteousness is counted by God as the beginning of righteousness; we shall find him rejoicing in the anticipated coronation when he is to be offered as a sacrifice on the altar at Rome; finding in Christ’s passion and death the world’s

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 4-10.

hope and the Church's glory ; seeing in Christ the very image and glory of the Infinite and Eternal Father ; we shall find in the apostle's later writings the elaboration and fulfillment in teaching of these seeds of the divine life, which have been sowed by the hand of God, in a heart ploughed and harrowed by trouble. But all, or nearly all, which we shall find explicit in Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians we find implicit in this letter of personal experiences — the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

CHAPTER X

THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS ¹

THE primitive Church, as it existed in Paul's time, was composed of three elements, distinct and sometimes antagonistic, though merging by insensible degrees one into the other; they were respectively composed of Jews, Gentiles, and proselytes. The former brought into the Christian Church their Jewish faith and Jewish traditions; the second knew nothing, or almost nothing, of either the Jewish faith or the Jewish traditions; while the third, those who had repudiated Greek polytheism and accepted faith in Jehovah as the one true and righteous God, occupied a position midway between the other two, and were probably the most liberal and independent of the three parties. The Galatian churches were composed largely of Jewish converts. In order to understand the

¹ I assume that the Galatian Christians, to whom Paul addressed this epistle, were in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, which, according to the book of Acts, he visited; not in the so-called North Galatia, a district lying to the north and east of Lycaonia and Phrygia, and constituting only a part of the great Roman province of Galatia, a region which we have no reason to think he ever visited. The question is not, for the interpretation of the letter, very important. The South Galatia view is held by Renan, Weizsäcker, Ramsay, and McGiffert.

epistle to the Galatians, and its bearing upon certain ecclesiastical and theological questions of our own time, it is necessary to comprehend, not only the nature of the Jewish party in the time of Paul, but also its tendency and its history in subsequent developments in the Christian Church.

The essential faith of Mosaism was that God is a righteous God, and demands righteousness of his children. The essential principle of Mosaism was obedience to the laws which God has made, and which have been by his prophets promulgated, by divine authority. The essential symbol of Mosaism was the Ten Commandments which present, as the sum of human duty, reverence for God, respect for parents, regard for the rights of person, property, and reputation, and the safeguarding of the family. This simple principle of Mosaism, that God is a righteous God, that he demands righteousness of his children, and demands nothing else, and that the principles of righteousness are those illustrated by the Ten Commandments, had, by the time of the Restoration from the Exile, been greatly modified. An elaborate ecclesiastical system had grown up, partly imported from paganism, with a priesthood, a ritual, and a central temple. It is not necessary for my purpose here to consider how far the Levitical code is a divine code, really organized and promulgated by Moses, and how far it is a human addition to and corruption of the simple ethical and spiritual principles which characterize the Book of the Covenant,

which is the oldest book in the Bible.¹ It must suffice to say that in the time of Christ this Levitical code was universally accepted by the Jews as of divine authority, equal in its obligations with the simpler and earlier law. The distinction between what we call the ceremonial and the moral law was, if not absolutely unknown, entirely ignored. Indeed, so far as the distinction was recognized at all, the stricter and more orthodox of the Pharisees gave preëminence to the ceremonial code and regarded the ceremonies inculcated by the Levitical law as more important and more sacred than those inculcated by the second table of the Ten Commandments.² This Levitical code imposed on its votaries numerous obligations, three of which chiefly concerned Paul's attention in the Epistle to the Galatians: their obligations to and through the priesthood, and the correlative rights and duties of the priesthood; the obligation of circumcision; and the obligation to observe certain sacred days, chief of which was the Sabbath Day. Let us consider these separately.

In the Jewish history the most casual reader of the English Bible will note two classes of sacred officers, priests and prophets. The priests were officially connected with the Temple. It was their function to offer sacrifice; they must belong to the family of Aaron, and therefore were necessarily of the tribe of Levi. They were supported by a regular tax levied upon all the worshipers, the amount

¹ Exodus xx. 1-xxiv. 7.

² See chap. ii. p. 23.

of which was fixed, though no provision appears to have been made for compelling the payment. It was a profanation for any one, not in the priestly succession, to enter the priests' court in the Temple, or to offer the sacrifices, and no one could come acceptably to God without a sacrifice. According to an ancient tradition, when Dathan and Abiram proposed to offer sacrifice to the Lord without authority, the earth opened and swallowed them up.¹ When Uzzah, who was not a Levite, ventured to put forth his hand to prevent the ark from falling off the cart on which it was being carried, he was instantly struck dead.² Whether these stories are historically accurate, or whether they were incorporated into Jewish history at a later period, in order to give historical sanction to the claims of the Jewish priesthood, first formulated at the time of the Restoration, it is not important for us here to determine. Those claims were universally accepted, and these stories were universally believed to be historical, by all devout and orthodox Jews in the time of Paul.

The prophets, on the other hand, belonged to no class and received no ordination. They were taken sometimes from the court and sometimes from the farm; sometimes they were educated, and sometimes, relatively speaking, uneducated. No appointment and no ecclesiastical approval was required. Any one might prophesy. If he felt, or thought he felt, the spirit of God upon him, he

¹ Num. xvi.

² 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.

was at liberty to give utterance to his message. Freedom of religious teaching was as absolutely secure under Judaism as it could be made in that olden time.¹ In this air of freedom there were then, as there are now, true prophets and false prophets.

When the Christian Church was born, the Jews, coming into the Christian Church, brought with them the Jewish conceptions concerning the priesthood, the sacrifices, and the Temple. They regarded the twelve apostles as the representatives of the twelve tribes. They believed that the peculiar authority of the priesthood passed over to the apostles and their successors. At first they continued the sacrificial worship in the Temple. When the Temple was destroyed, the sacrificial worship could no longer be continued, because the law prohibited the offering of sacrifices except at the Temple; but still the essential idea lingered in the mind of the Jewish portion of the Christian Church, that approach could be made to God acceptably only through a priesthood and by means of a sacrifice. That idea, in a certain portion of the Christian Church, remains to this day. The Christian ministry are regarded as the legitimate successors of the Jewish priesthood; that priesthood is regarded as permanent, its sacredness as

¹ Imposture and treasonable speech were punishable, but not erroneous doctrine. Deut. xiii. 1-5; xviii. 20-22. For illustrations of freedom of speech, see 2 Sam. xii. 1-7; 1 Kings xxi. 17-24.

enduring, its office as essential to the institution of religion. The modern clergyman is therefore regarded as a priest, as truly as was the ancient Jewish Temple official. It is true that he no longer belongs to the house of Aaron or the tribe of Levi, but he is no less in a churchly succession. He must receive his authority from priests who preceded him, and they from still preceding priests, and so he must be able to trace his ecclesiastical lineage back to the apostles, through whom he derives his priestly authority from Christ. And these priests have the same substantial office to perform as did the priests in the old Jewish Temple. The simple supper which Christ told men to take in memory of him is converted into the bloodless sacrifice of the mass, and every time the bread is broken and the wine is poured out, a new sacrifice for sin is offered by the Christian priest. This Christian priest, offering this sacrifice, must have an altar; and so the simple supper-table, on which the memorial of Christ was celebrated in the primitive Church, is converted into an altar, set apart for sacrificial purposes. The analogy to the Priests' Court in the ancient Temple, which only the priest might enter, is a sacred chancel which only the clergyman may enter. The church edifice is no longer a meeting-house or an assembly for worshipers; it is a temple, with the various paraphernalia of the ancient Temple, if not literally repeated, at least symbolically represented. Thus, according to this conception, Christianity is a law,

righteousness is obedience, the clergyman is a priest, the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice, the communion-table is an altar, and the church is a temple.

The second element in the Jewish Church, with which the Epistle to the Galatians deals, is the rite of circumcision. A difference of opinion respecting the origin of this rite exists, similar to the difference of opinion which exists respecting the origin of the sacrificial system. It is certain that circumcision was known outside of Jewish circles in times preceding the age of Moses, and it is almost certain that it was borrowed by the Jews from other nations. That is no argument against its divinely appointed function, for it seems generally to have been the divine plan not to create new ceremonials, but to take ceremonials which already existed and give them a new and sacred significance. Thus, Christ took the simple family supper, which constituted the most essential feature in the Passover celebration, and gave to it a new significance by making it a memorial of himself, and of the deliverance which he brings to all mankind. At what time circumcision became incorporated in the Jewish national life as a required ceremonial is not altogether clear. Apparently, however, it originated in the days of Abraham, was maintained during the Egyptian captivity, fell into abeyance during the wanderings in the wilderness, and was revived under Joshua.¹ It is certain that it had existed among the Jews for eleven or twelve

¹ Gen. xvii. 10; Exod. iv. 25, 26; Josh. v. 4, 5.

hundred years ; perhaps for seventeen or eighteen hundred, and it was a distinguishing characteristic of the Jewish people in the time of Christ. No man could become an heir of the Jewish promise, no man could be recognized as a true worshiper of the true God, unless he was circumcised. The most vigorous and intense term of reproach which a Jew could apply to another was the phrase "an uncircumcised dog." Thus circumcision was wrought into the very life of the Jewish nation, and made the entrance door to it.

As in the Jewish conception of Christianity, the church, the ministry, and the Lord's Supper have taken the place respectively of the Temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifice, so, in that conception, baptism has taken the place of circumcision. In the time of Paul, when a pagan became a Jew, he was baptized ; that is, he was led into the water and immersed in it, and, according to the later rabbinical teaching, entirely submerged in it from head to foot. It was contended by the stricter sect of the Pharisees that if this submersion was in any respect incomplete, the baptism was ineffectual. In this ceremony his old faiths were washed away. He was said, in rabbinical phraseology, to be buried in baptism and raised a new creature. This ceremony, which the Jews had used as a means of entrance for pagans into the Jewish Church, John the Baptizer employed, giving to it a new significance, as a means of solemn profession, of new life, among the Jews. This last of the Hebrew prophets

said in effect to those who listened to him: You need cleansing as much as the pagans ; your faiths are no better than theirs ; you need repentance no less than they ; you also must be submerged, and wash away your old faiths and your old sins, and rise into a new life, in which you will cease to do evil and learn to do well. Baptism was never used by Christ during his life, but it was employed by disciples of Christ who had previously been disciples of John the Baptizer ;¹ and it received Christ's sanction after his death, and in this sanction a new direction and a new meaning. The apostles were told to baptize men, not into the Jewish Church, not merely into a repentance which ceases to do evil and learns to do well, but into the power and authority of a new life with God—into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.² Baptism thus became an entrance door to the Christian Church, as circumcision had been an entrance door to the Jewish Church. It was administered only to adults, and to them only on confession of their faith. It was the way in which the convert confessed his faith in Christ, a solemn symbolical expression of that faith and of the consecration which accompanied it, and of the new hope and new life which grew out of that faith and that consecration.

But as the Church increased in numbers and in solidity of organization, and as time passed on, and

¹ John iv. 1, 2 ; comp. John i. 35 ff.

² Matt. xxviii. 19 ; comp. Acts xix. 1-5.

the second coming of Christ was more and more postponed in the thought of the Church to a remote future, the Church became dissatisfied with a rite which brought only the convert into the Church, and left his household outside. He wished to bring his children with him. Was he a Jew? his children were born into Judaism. Was he a Christian? he wished his children to be born into Christianity. Thus the Jewish conception of circumcision and its office passed over into baptism, which was transformed from its original purpose to meet the new demand made upon it. The infant Christian was baptized, as the infant Jew had been circumcised, and by this baptism he was made a Christian, as by circumcision the Jewish infant was made a Jew. As a natural consequence, it came to be believed that no one could be a Christian who was not baptized, as no one could be a Jew who was not circumcised. But Christianity was recognized even by the most formal and ecclesiastical in the Church as in some sense a new life, and a new and vital relation to God. Hence baptism came to be regarded as a means by which this new life was conferred, this new and vital relation formed, this transformation of character into that of a child of God effected. Thus the doctrine of baptismal regeneration found its way into a very considerable section of the Christian Church;¹

¹ "By baptism we are cleansed from sin, adopted into God's family, being made his children by spiritual birth, so that his First-begotten Son is not ashamed to call us brethren." — Blunt's *Theological Dictionary*, article "Baptism."

the transformation was completed ; and the free gift of God, received by faith, was made dependent on a purely mechanical process, not in the least understood by the babe who was subjected to it.

The third characteristic of Judaism with which the book of Galatians deals was the setting apart of certain days for special sacred observance. Some of these were fast-days ; more of them were feast-days. The most important of all was the Seventh, or Sabbath day. So important was this that the command enforcing it found a place among the Ten Commandments. It is the only approximation to a ceremonial law found in that primitive code of Mosaism. But the Fourth Commandment can hardly be classified with ceremonial laws or even as akin to them, since, as defined in that commandment, the Sabbath was simply a rest-day. The word "holy" as there used simply means set apart, and is explained by the specifications which follow : "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath [that is, Rest] of the Lord thy God ; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." The priests early and very legitimately made use of this day for additional Temple services, and the prophets habitually and wisely made use of it for religious instruction. This, however, if not an afterthought, was certainly a secondary use. Gradually there grew up additions to this simple law and this

national habit of religious observance.¹ By the time of Christ, the day which God had appointed for freedom had become a day of bondage. When Christ cured the cripple on the Sabbath day, he was condemned by the ruler of the synagogue for breaking the Sabbath law ;² and when he bade the cripple take the mat on which he lay, and which he could easily roll up and carry under his arm, and take away with him, the man was condemned for violating the Sabbath day, because he bore a burden.³ Christ deliberately and publicly set at naught these Pharisaic and Jewish additions to the primitive law, but it cannot be said that he in terms set the law itself aside. He treated the Sabbath as he treated circumcision and the sacrifices. He declared that the faith of the uncircumcised centurion was greater than any he had seen in Israel ; but he did not in terms discard circumcision. He forgave men their sins, without ever sending them to the temple to offer sacrifice as a condition of forgiveness ;⁴ but he did not in terms discard sacrifices. So he repudiated the burdensome regulations with which the Sabbath had been hedged about ; but he did not in terms set the Sabbath day aside.

¹ A striking illustration of this development of the Sabbath is afforded by the account in Nehemiah xiii. 15-22.

² Luke xiii. 14.

³ John v. 10.

⁴ Luke xvii. 14 is not an exception. The lepers were sent to the priest for examination and the health certificate which the law required before they could mix again with men. Lev. ch. xiii. xiv.

When the Jews came into the Christian Church, with their notion of priestly authority and the obligation of circumcision, they brought with them also their belief in the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath day. When, on the other hand, the Gentiles came into the Christian Church, they knew as little of a Sabbath day as they did of circumcision or the Jewish sacrificial system. But both Jewish and Gentile Christians could not forget the first day of the week, on which Christ rose from the dead. This was their great gala day, not imposed upon them by any obligation from without, but observed with joy and gladness by a natural impulse from within. Thus at first two holy days were kept in the Christian Church, — the Sabbath, or seventh day, because it was Jewish; the Lord's day, or first day of the week, because it was the day of Christ's resurrection. As the pagan element increased and the Jewish element decreased in numbers, the seventh day gradually fell into disuse, the first day alone lived.¹

But when the seventh day fell into disuse, the

¹ The question is often asked, What is the authority for the change of day? There is none except that general authority which God has reposed in his children everywhere to worship him according to the dictates of their own conscience and in the way that best suits their spiritual life. There is nowhere in the New Testament a statement of divine authority explicitly given for any change in the day. Those who think themselves under obligation to maintain the Mosaic law are right in thinking that they should observe the seventh day rather than the first. Sunday belongs to the liberty of the children of God.

law which had created it and had imposed it upon the Jewish people was transferred to the first day. The notion came to be diffused in the Church, and exists to the present time, that all the obligations of the seventh day were transferred to the first; that the Fourth Commandment is of perpetual obligation, but that the observance which it imposed is fulfilled by the observance of another day in the place of the one originally appointed. A part of those who hold this view — a very small part, it is true, but more logical than the rest — maintain that the Jewish law remains still in force, that it is the seventh day that is sacred and not the first, and that we shall never have a true Sabbath, nor a true Christianity, nor a true religion until we go back to the seventh day, and thus fulfill the obligation imposed, as it is claimed, on all mankind by the primitive code of Mosaism. But the great majority of Christians regard the Fourth Commandment as in part obligatory and in part not, without having any clear idea of how they are to distinguish between what is and what is not obligatory.

Thus there has come into the Christian Church from the Jewish Church its fundamental conception of religion as consisting in obedience to a law of God imposed on mankind from without; and this conception is illustrated in three characteristics of the Jewish Church, perpetuated, though in a modified form, — namely, the priesthood and its sacrificial system, as a necessary condition of

acceptable approach to God; circumcision transformed into baptism, as a necessary means of entrance into the Church; and the Sabbath as a special day of religious observance universally obligatory because of the Fourth Commandment.

When Paul first came into Galatia, preaching, he denied the fundamental postulate of this system. He denied that religion consists in obedience to a law imposed by God upon mankind. "Be it known therefore to you, men and brethren," he said, "that through this man to you is proclaimed the remission of sins; and from all from which you could not be justified in the law of Moses, in him, every man having faith is justified."¹ The sending away of sin, the deliverance from its power, its burden, and its penalty, the being made right in one's self, the being brought into right relations with God, cannot be accomplished — this was the substance of the message — by living in the law of Moses. It can be accomplished only by living in Christ, who is the revelation of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God.

Paul and his message were received with great enthusiasm. Despite the recurrence of that mysterious malady to which he seems to have been at times subjected, despite some obscuration of the vision and some mark upon his face which rendered him in appearance repulsive, especially to those who had been taught to believe that every

¹ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

such physical blemish was a sign of divine displeasure, the Galatians welcomed him with ardent affection. "If it had been possible," he says, "you would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me."¹ But their enthusiasm was too intense to be long lived. Apostles of a Jewish Christianity, claiming, if not possessing, the authority of the Church at Jerusalem, followed Paul here, as they did elsewhere, in order to oppose him.² They insisted that Paul was no apostle; that he had received no authority from the Twelve, and none from the Church at Jerusalem; that he was setting aside the laws of God, the authority of the priesthood and apostolate, the sacred rite of circumcision, doubly sacred from its divine origin and its identification with the history of God's chosen people, and the law of the Sabbath day, placed by its very position in the Ten Commandments on the same level with the laws against idolatry, profaneness, murder, theft, and adultery. They even charged him with inconsistency, and with preaching the necessity of circumcision when he preached to Jewish congregations.³ The Galatians hesitated, halted, went backwards. They questioned whether the leader whom they had received with such enthusiasm had not spoken without authority. They questioned whether they must not reinstate the rite of circumcision which

¹ Galatians iv. 13-15.

² Gal. i. 7; iii. 1; iv. 17; v. 7-12; vi. 12, 13.

³ Gal. v. 11.

they had abandoned. They began again the Jewish observance of the Sabbath day. The news of these changes was brought to Paul. It is to remonstrate with the Galatians, and to reply to the apostles of Jewish Christianity, that he writes his letter. In it he offers no compromise, suggests no retraction and no apology. He reaffirms his radical position that righteousness does not consist in obedience to law, and accepts all the conclusions which that affirmation involves.

He begins with his own personal experience. In the opening words of his letter he repudiates, as explicitly as words can repudiate, the notion that a Christian minister's authority is dependent on any human or ecclesiastical appointment. "Paul," he says, "an apostle, not deriving his authority from men, neither through the instrumentality of men, but through Jesus Christ and God our Father who raised him from the dead."¹ And then, as if to emphasize the equality of all men in the Christian Church, Apostles and non-Apostles, he adds, "And all the brethren which are with me, to the churches of Galatia."² He will have no compromise with Judaism in the Christian Church. "If any other man," he says, "or we ourselves, or even an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached

¹ Παῦλος ἀπόστολος, οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

² Gal. i. 1, 2.

unto you, let him be accursed.”¹ That gospel he has not received from any apostolic college, nor through any apostolic succession: “I neither received it from man, neither was taught it; but I received it through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”² His independence of all apostolic succession or appointment he goes on to make still clearer by a bit of autobiography. When he was converted, he did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did he go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were “apostles before me.” He began straightway to preach without any ordination of any description.³ Not till three years later did he go up to Jerusalem, where he saw Peter and James, the Lord’s brother, and no one else. He was not even known by face to the churches of Judea.⁴ When, fourteen years after, he went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus, it was not to get ordination, nor to yield to nor to compromise with the Jewish Christians who were attempting to import into the Church the Jewish priesthood. “To them,” he said, “not even for an hour did we yield ourselves in subjection.”⁵ The apostles received him and Barnabas, not on any ground of apostolic ordination, but because they saw in the work accomplished demonstration that the free gift of God had been given to them. For that reason, and that only, did James, Peter and John give them the right hand of fellowship in the continuance of

¹ Gal. i. 8, 9.² Gal. i. 11, 12.³ Gal. i. 15–18.⁴ Gal. i. 22.⁵ Gal. ii. 5.

that work.¹ As to the primacy of Peter, already apparently claimed for Peter by some whom perhaps Peter would have disowned, Paul makes short work of it. "I withstood him," he says, "to his face, because he was to be blamed." And he did this "before them all."²

Paul next appeals to the experience of the Galatians. How did they obtain the spirit of the new life? — by obedience to an external law, or by receiving that spirit gladly through faith? Having received this spirit as the beginning of their new life, did they expect to perfect that life by going back to live under the law? Have all their past experiences been in vain? Have these experiences taught them nothing? How came their spiritual powers, their varied gifts? Did these come to them by obedience to the law of Moses, or by the reception of the Spirit of God through faith?³

Then Paul appeals to the Old Testament history. Which came first, faith or law? Faith came first. Before there was any law, before Mount Sinai, before Moses — four hundred and thirty years before — God gave the promise to Abraham and to his seed. And this promise made to faith, and to Abraham as the father of the faithful, cannot be annulled by a subsequent law. The promise which God has once given he cannot take back. When he has said to men, If you have faith in me, that is all I ask, he cannot afterward add other

¹ Gal. ii. 7-9.

² Gal. ii. 11, 14.

³ Gal. iii. 1-5.

conditions, and say, I also require you to obey the law.¹

What, then, is the use of the law? It was added to make clear to men that they needed the life which is received only through faith. The law was like a prison in which men were kept shut up until faith should be revealed to them as the means of their deliverance. It was like a tutor who rules a child till he is old enough to rule himself. Among the Greeks and Romans it was customary to employ a specially trustworthy slave, charged with the duty of supervising and caring for the children until they were of age sufficient to go unattended to their school. He accompanied them out-of-doors on all occasions, was responsible for their personal safety, guarded them against bad company, went with them to and from the school or the gymnasium, and in general exercised over them a rigorous censorship. He was called a *pædagogus*, from which our word "pedagogue" comes. He was not properly an instructor or teacher, but rather a censor and disciplinarian.² The law, says Paul, has been such a *pædagogus* to bring us unto Christ. But now that we have arrived at manhood in him, we are no longer under a *pædagogus*. We have always been sons of God and heirs of God, but so long as an heir is a child,

¹ Gal. iii. 7-17.

² "His duty was rather to guard them from evil, both physical and moral, than to communicate instruction, to cultivate their minds, or impart acquirements." — Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, article "Pædagogus."

he is under guardians and stewards. So the race in its childhood was under the rigorous rules necessary for and characteristic of those who are living worldly lives.¹ But the very object of Christ's coming was that men might be redeemed from these rigorous rules, might receive the adoption of sons, might have the same spirit which was in Christ in their own hearts, might live free and joyous, because divine, lives. How is it, then, that the Galatians have turned back to the life of bondage under these rules, which are weak, unable to accomplish anything, beggarly, bringing no enrichment to the life? He appeals to them, by their affection for him, by their memories of their first reception of him, by his love for them, to return again to the life of liberty.²

These appeals and arguments he enforces by a curious piece of rabbinical allegorizing. He tells the story of Abraham and his wives Sarah and Hagar, and their sons Isaac and Ishmael. He treats this Old Testament story as a parable. They that are under the law he compares to Ishmael, child of the bond-woman; they that are freed from the law by Christ, to Isaac, child of the free woman. As then Ishmael mocked at Isaac, so now the legalist scoffs at the free Christian; as then Ishmael was cast out and Isaac inherited, so now the legalist shall not inherit with the free

¹ Gal. iv. 3. "Elements of the world" (*στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*) are rigorous rules characteristic of world-life.

² Gal. iii. 19-iv. 20.

Christian.¹ We may question the legitimacy of the argument, concerning which Professor Jowett has well said: "Strange as it may at first appear that his [Paul's] mode of interpreting the Old Testament Scriptures should not conform to our laws of logic, it would be far stranger if it had not conformed to the natural modes of thought in his own day;" but we may well accept the conclusion to which Paul conducts his readers: "Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free. With that freedom Christ has made us free. Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."²

This allegory is a digression. Paul resumes his argument. If the Christian receives circumcision, if he accepts the obligations of the law, if he hopes to become righteous by obedience to an external standard, he must obey it absolutely and in every part. He cannot take part and leave part. He must either stand on his obedience, — and if he is to do this, the obedience must be perfect, — or he must find another standing-ground, and "by faith wait for the hope of righteousness."³ This is the standing-ground to which Paul calls his readers. Their hope is in the free gift of life from God through Jesus Christ. Will not this freedom lead them on to sin? No. For it is the freedom of a

¹ Gal. iv. 21-31.

² Gal. iv. 31-v. 1. διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας. Τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν· στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε.

³ Gal. v. 5.

spiritual life, and if one is walking according to the spirit, if he is living the spiritual life, if he is inspired by faith in God, by hope of God's righteousness, and by love for God and God's children, he will no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh; the desires of the flesh and of the spirit are contrary the one to the other, and he cannot do the evil things to which the flesh calls him, if he is led to the life of holiness by the spirit within him.¹ And then Paul puts in sharp contrast the two lives, — the works of the flesh, the fruit of the spirit: —

“What I mean is this: walk according to the impulses of the spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are contrary to those of the spirit, and those of the spirit are contrary to those of the flesh; for these are set in array against each other, in order that you may not be able to do what you wish. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under law. But the works of the flesh are apparent to all, for example: fornication, impurity, wantonness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousies, passionate outbreaks, intrigues, divisions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, carousals, and such like; of which I forewarn you, as I did before forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, serviceableness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law. And they that are

¹ Gal. v. 13-18. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh” describes the conflict between the fleshly and the spiritual in man, and corresponds to Romans vii. 7-24.

Jesus Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and its evil desires." ¹

He closes his letter with some practical counsels, pervaded by the spirit of the instructions which have preceded. Then, as though he could not bear to let this letter go without one more effort to recover the affections and the loyalty of his friends and disciples, he takes the pen into his own hand — the previous part of the epistle he had dictated to an amanuensis — and in large characters, such as a half-blind man might write, adds an autographic postscript, aflame with his own experience. "Through Christ," he says, "the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." ²

The teaching of Paul in the epistle to the Galatians may all be summed up in the sentence, Nothing external to man is of the essence of religion: no order of ministry, no form of church service, no rite or ceremony, no day of observance. It is, indeed, true that the religious spirit must always embody itself in some form. If there is to be religious instruction, there must be instructors; if public worship, leaders of that worship; if united work for Christ, an organization by which the work is to be carried on; if special services for the development of the spiritual life, special times when those

¹ Gal. v. 16-24.

² Gal. vi. 14, 15. ὅυτε γὰρ περιτομή τι ἔστιν ὅυτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινή κτίσις.

services can be held. Thus, religion must always have teachers, services, rites, observances.

But no particular order of teachers, form of service, method of rite, or time of observance is of the essence of religion. Faith, hope, and love alone are eternal. The language which they use, the methods and instruments which they employ, may be changed from time to time, that they may be adapted to new conditions of life. The notion that any ordination of any kind is essential to the Christian ministry, Paul repudiates in this epistle to the Galatians in the most explicit terms. It is true that he was separated to a special work by the laying on of hands;¹ but it is also true that no apostle was present at this ordination, which was not to the ministry but to a special missionary service, and that he had preached the gospel, and, indeed, exercised all the functions of an apostle, for something like ten years before his entrance upon this special service. And there is not, either in the book of Acts or in any of Paul's letters, the least indication that any apostle had anything to do with this or any other ordination of Paul. The notion that Paul received his apostolate from the apostles is explicitly denied by him. Elsewhere we shall find him implying that there is no priest and no sacrifice other than Christ,² and this, which he implies, is still more explicitly affirmed by the unknown

¹ Acts xiii. 1-3.

² 1 Cor. v. 7. Comp. Rom. xii. 1; Ephes. v. 2; Phil. ii. 17; iv. 18.

author of the epistle to the Hebrews.¹ The modern minister, if he can be said to be a successor of any order in the Jewish Church, is a prophet, not a priest. Never is he called a priest in the New Testament. All God's children are, in the Apocalypse, accounted both kings and priests unto God.² On the other hand, the religious teacher is not infrequently designated as a prophet;³ and the prophet was in no order, received no ordination, belonged to no sacred and exclusive fraternity, received as his sole appointment the consciousness of a divine message within his own heart.

As neither priest nor sacrifice is essential to religion, so no rite or ceremonial. Circumcision is quite as explicitly commanded by the Old Testament as is baptism by the New,⁴ and it was a more distinctive badge of God's visible Church. Christ never set it aside himself; Paul does not claim that he had any divine revelation directing him to set it aside. He abandoned it, because experience proved that, in the new conditions, it was a hindrance, not a help, to piety. The liberty which Paul thus exercised belongs to the Church in all ages. A majority in the Church have exercised that liberty as regards baptism. It was formerly administered by immersion, if not always by submersion, which in a warm climate was not inconvenient. The

¹ Heb. vii. 27; ix. 23-28; x. 10-14.

² Rev. i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6. Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 28; xiv. 29; Ephes. ii. 20; iii. 5; iv. 11.

⁴ Gen. xvii. 10, 13.

Church has substituted sprinkling. It was employed as a symbolical expression of personal repentance and faith. The Church has transformed it into an expression of parental consecration. If baptism is a law, as circumcision was a law, and Christians are under the law, as Jews were under the law, then baptism should be by immersion, and administered only to adults. The justification for the change is to be found only in the fact that no rite or ceremony is of the essence of religion, and that God's children have the liberty to change any rite or ceremonial, if, by so doing, they think they can better minister to Christian life.

What is true of baptism is equally true of the Lord's Supper. That its observance does not rest on any explicit command of Christ, Dr. McGiffert has very clearly shown.¹ To make its observance essential to Christianity is to make Christianity simply a new form of Judaism. The method of observance has long since changed. It is nowhere celebrated in an upper chamber, at the close of a meal, by men only, and they reclining at a common table. In many churches fermented wine is abandoned; in some, individual cups are used in lieu of a common cup; in one great section of the Church only the priest partakes of the cup; by a small but very devout body of Christian disciples both baptism and the Lord's Supper are dropped from the Church life altogether. All these variations are entirely within the liberty of the children of God. Baptism

¹ *The Apostolic Age*, p. 68, note.

and the Lord's Supper are to be observed only in so far as they promote the spiritual life, and in whatever forms they will best promote that life.

As no priestly order, no sacrifice, and no rite or ceremonial is of the essence of religion, so neither is any sacred observance or sacred time. To regard observance of special days as essential to religion and to acceptance with God, Paul condemns. He says : —

“ Now, when ye have gained the knowledge of God, or, rather, when God has acknowledged you, how is it that ye are turning back to those rules, weak and beggarly, to which you desire again to be in bondage ? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years.” ¹

That he includes in this phrase the observance of Sabbath days he makes perfectly explicit in his letter to the Colossians. “ Let no man therefore judge you, in meat or in drink, or in respect of feasts, or new moon, or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is Christ's.” ² If we are under the Jewish law, if the Fourth Commandment is of perpetual obligation, if to gain acceptance with God we must keep one day set apart to his special service in some special form, then the Seventh-Day Christian is right. Saturday should be our Sabbath, and the Mosaic law should determine our method of observing it. This is not Paul's conception of religion. The simple duty of the Christian is summed up in faith and hope and

¹ Gal. iv. 9, 10.

² Col. ii. 16, 17.

love. He is to take such time for the cultivation of the spiritual life and employ such methods as experience indicates will best accomplish the coveted result. If he does not desire spiritual life, no Sabbath-day observance will promote it. If he does desire spiritual life, he is free to select that time and that method which are best adapted to promote it. The Christian Church has not frankly accepted this philosophy, but has unconsciously acted upon it. The first day has taken the place of the seventh, and the method of observance has changed quite as radically as the time observed.

To sum all up in a single sentence. In Christ there is neither priest nor sacrifice. The priest is a mediator between man and God. In Christ the way of access to God is open to the humblest, the poorest, and the most sinful. The veil of the Temple is rent. Every man may enter the Holy of Holies. But there are still prophets, who, knowing God, interpret him to his children. Whoever knows the Father may do this work of interpretation. Whoever entereth in by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.¹ Whoever heareth may say, Come.² There is no special symbol of consecration which is essential to divine sonship. Neither is immersion anything, nor sprinkling anything, but a new creation. Life is itself the test of all instruments of life. There are Pedo-Baptists as consecrated to Christ as Baptists; and there are Friends,

¹ John x. 2.

² Revelation xxii. 17.

who have received no water baptism of any kind, as consecrated as either. No day is of the essence of religion. The Church has done wisely to make of Christ's resurrection day a festal occasion. It has done wisely to celebrate that resurrection every week. It has done wisely to keep this festal day free from the cares and the toils of secular life, and to use it for the culture of the spirit and for the public and united expression of devotion. But the obligation of the Lord's Day lies not in an ancient code, given through Moses to an ancient people, but in this: that the observance of such a day helps to conserve and promote the fruits of the Spirit, — love, joy, peace, long-suffering, serviceableness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.

CHAPTER XI

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS — I

PAUL'S epistle to the Romans more nearly resembles a treatise than any other of his epistles. At a very early date it was published in two editions, one with the personal matter omitted from it, and in this form it served the purpose of a general treatise or circular letter to the churches. The other is the form with which we are familiar. There is some difference of opinion among scholars as to which of these was the early form, but it is not important to determine that question. Whether Paul first wrote it as a letter, and it was reëdited to be a treatise, or whether he first wrote it as a circular letter or treatise, and then added to it to make it a letter, in either case the form indicates its essential character — that is, that it is general rather than specific, a letter fitted to serve the purpose of a treatise.¹

It was written to the Christian church at Rome. Of this Christian church at Rome we know nothing, though we can surmise some things. We know this : that the Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and wherever they went they

¹ See this matter fully discussed in Bishop Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays*, Essay IX.

carried with them something of the qualities which they carry with them still. They were shrewd, thrifty, and successful as traders. They mixed freely with men of the Roman Empire in trade, but they mixed with them no otherwise. What Shakespeare makes Shylock say might well have been said by a Jew in the first century: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." They possessed a virile and aggressive faith, and it was the only virile and aggressive faith in the Roman Empire. They believed in one God, who was a righteous God, and who demanded righteousness of his people; and they carried this belief in a righteous God and in the laws of righteousness, as interpreted in the Ten Commandments, with them wherever they went. It is true that they were more earnest to enforce their conceptions of law on others than to obey their conceptions of law themselves. But still they had a virile faith and an aggressive religion, and men of intelligence and probity (and there were such men in the general degradation and degeneracy of the Roman Empire) were attracted to their virile faith and their aggressive religion. So there sprang up in every community what were called by the Jews proselytes, or, in the Book of Acts, "devout" men. They were still pagans; that is, they were not circumcised, and did not generally worship in the synagogue; but they believed in one true God as against

belief in the many gods, and in a righteous God as against belief in immoral gods, and in a spiritual God as against belief in the gods that could be represented by idols and images.

The Christian church at Rome was composed of three elements : partly of converted Jews, partly of converted pagans, but probably very largely of converted proselytes. These last were Romans who, prior to their conversion to Christianity, had ceased to believe in Jove and Mercury and Venus ; and to worship in pagan temples, except simply as matter of convenience and in conformity to the fashions of the times ; and who had come to believe, more or less profoundly, in one righteous God, and to that extent had accepted Judaism. Out of this class — the most moral, the most intelligent, and the most liberal of the Roman Empire, free on the one hand from the trammels of Judaism, freed on the other hand from the superstitions of paganism — the Christian churches were largely composed ; the Christian church in the Roman capital probably chiefly composed.

It was to this church that Paul wrote his letter, about the year 58 A. D., four years after Nero had ascended the throne. Paul was still at Corinth, or possibly had started from Corinth on his journey to Jerusalem, whither he was to carry contributions from the Macedonian churches to the poor. He had already written those letters to the Corinthians and the Galatians which we have considered. He had seen converted pagans mistaking

license for liberty, casting off all moral restraint, and allowing themselves indulgence in grossly immoral conduct, and had written strenuously in rebuke of that notion to the Corinthians; he had seen converted Jews falling back into Judaism, and living under the restraints of the ceremonial law, and had written to call the Galatians back to the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. He had written of the obligation of moral life to the one; he had written of the freedom from the Mosaic ritual to the other. Teachers learn, if they are wise teachers, more from their teaching than they communicate to their pupils; and Paul by his teaching had learned as well as communicated. He had begun life a Pharisee, believing that religion consisted in obedience to the law, and, pre-eminently, in obedience to the ceremonial law, because it was the ceremonial law which dictated the duties that man owed directly and immediately to God. He had cast off this yoke of bondage, and he had exhorted his converts to cast it off. And yet, when he came to preach to pagans, he found them quite ready to cast off all law and all moral obligation, and to consider themselves set free therefrom, to follow their appetites and passions wherever they led. In this letter to the Romans he brings together his twofold teaching to the Corinthians and to the Galatians. He considers more thoroughly than he had done in either letter the whole relation of law to life. That may be said to be the subject of his epistle. It is divided into

four parts. In the first he discusses law as a remedy for an evil age and an evil life; in the second he sets forth the gospel as a remedy for an evil age and an evil life; in the third he considers how far that gospel extends and who may take advantage of it; in the fourth he enters into some practical applications and general ethical reflections.

We shall best consider this letter by following these divisions (though they are not as sharply marked in the letter as I have marked them) and taking them in their order. But to do this, we must first endeavor to form a picture of the Roman world at the time at which Paul wrote the epistle to the Christian Church. For Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, was the centre of the Roman world.

From the Roman capital proceeded all law; in it was centralized all authority. The Emperor was an absolute despot, and all provincial governors were appointed by him and answerable to him. And as all authority was centralized there, so was all life. Rome not only gave the laws, Rome set the fashions, for the world. What life was in the imperial city of Rome, that, in its essential elements, though modified somewhat by provincial customs, it was throughout the world. Thus the relation of Rome to the Empire was somewhat analogous to the relation of Paris to France, though the city of Rome was far more dominating in the Empire than is Paris in France. If life could be touched at Rome, it would be touched

throughout the world; if it could be changed in Rome, it would be changed throughout the world.

There are six standards by which we may measure any existing civilization: by the character of the government; by the condition of labor; by the moral standards which prevail in the social life; by the state of the home and the position of woman; by the quality and extent of education; and by the nature and influence of the religious institutions.¹

The government of Rome was an absolute despotism. The Emperor's will was law, unmodified by any thought either of parental relation, of religious obligation, or of fear of the people. For the eighty-two years between the accession of Tiberius to the throne and the death of Domitian Rome was ruled over by the five worst tyrants the world has ever seen. Gibbon, — who, it is true, cannot be wholly trusted as a historical authority, but whose graphic pictures are nevertheless significant and effective, and in this particular case true, — thus characterizes them: "The dark, unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid, inhuman Domitian." Tiberius made it a law that to speak in derogation of the Emperor was treason; and one man was put to death because, in changes in his garden, he had removed

¹ This picture of Roman life in the first century is given more fully in the Introduction to my Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, and the authorities are there cited.

the statue of the Emperor from it. Caligula was a madman, insanely wicked. When the cruel sports in the arena drew toward their close, because there were not victims enough to satisfy his greed for blood, he sent his servitors around and took here a man and there a woman from the audience, and flung them over into the arena, that the cruel sport might still continue. At his feasts he was accustomed, not infrequently, to have victims tortured, that his eating might go on to the music of their groans and tears. If Caligula was a madman, Claudius was an idiot. He fell under the dominion of perhaps the most shameful and wicked woman the world has ever seen; and never does shamelessness and wickedness go so far or show itself in vice so odious as in a woman given over to vice. Messalina compelled by torture the women of her court to join with her, not only in bacchanalian orgies, but in vice too shameless to be mentioned. Nero was crazy with vanity, — a sensationalist of sensationalists, giving himself to dramatic entertainments made real; “a painstaking stage hero, an operatic Emperor, music-mad, trembling before the pit, and making the pit tremble too:” so Renan describes him.¹ Sensation-mad I call him; if he did not actually set fire to Rome, he came, when it was blazing, that he might enjoy the gorgeous spectacle of its ruin; then impaled the Christians on stakes, covered them with

¹ *Anti-Christ*, p. 117. The volume gives a graphic and dramatic picture of the times.

inflammable material, set fire to them, and let them burn, that by their flames his garden might be illuminated. The Antichrist, the early Christians called him. Beast, he is designated in the Revelation of John. Whether the story be true or not, I know not; but the story runs, derived not from Christian but from pagan sources, that in one of these arenas, when women were flung into the arena to make cruel sport for wild beasts, he dressed himself in a beast's skin and amused himself by attacking them.

This was the condition of government in Rome. Its labor condition was no better. One half the Roman people were slaves, and slavery was not ameliorated by any suggestion of Christianity pleading for mercy, nor by any restraint of law, as in the older Judaism. The slave was the absolute property of his master, who might do with him what he would. One slave-owner threw a slave into his pond to feed his fishes. Another sacrificed a slave for stealing quail. Four hundred slaves were sacrificed because their master had been assassinated. These were the least cruel acts of the Roman master. One cannot think of the horrors that thrilled in the heart of a maiden slave in that age. The other half of Rome was divided in unequal portions: a few rich men living in unstinted extravagance and luxury; many poor, living on the very edge of starvation, and kept from it only by great cargoes of corn given from time to time by the Roman Empire or by the

Roman millionaires. Labor was disgraced, as it always is in a slave state ; even the higher forms of labor were disgraced, for slaves were copyists — that is, printers — and writers and authors and secretaries. All industry was done by servile toil ; war was the only profession. Says Mommsen : “ Nowhere, perhaps, has the essential maxim of the slave state, that the rich man who lives by the exertion of his slaves is necessarily respectable, and the poor man who lives by the labor of his hands is necessarily vulgar, been recognized with so terrible a precision as the undoubted principle underlying all public and private intercourse.”

There was nothing in social life to afford a basis for political reform. The few rich men in Rome never had read the Mosaic provisions urging men to beneficence, never had been incited by the example and the ministry of Christ to charity, and never had it dawned upon them that wealth was a trust for which they must give an account. So they heaped up money they knew not how to use, save in luxurious self-indulgence. One man, it is said, gave a single feast which cost \$400,000, and that at a time when the wages of a workingman were twelve to fifteen cents a day. Drunken orgies went on from day to day, lasting sometimes an entire week. Over the vices of that sensual age one must draw a veil. Paul’s description is abundantly verified by Roman historians and Roman satirists.

From the horrors and the debasements of such a life men and women could not flee for refuge and

for purity to their homes. It can hardly be said that there were any homes. The very word had no existence in the language. There was nothing we would call marriage. Once it had been a sacrament, and when man and woman were married in Rome the marriage was for better, for worse, till death came to sunder the wedded pair. But that period had passed away. Marriage was now but a civil contract. Man and woman entered into a partnership which lasted only so long as it was agreeable to them both. Either might send the other away at will. In truth there was no marriage; there were bargains by which men and women agreed to live together at mutual pleasure. And the freedom of divorce, which in our own time men are seeking to bring back from pagan Rome, had done nothing to lessen the licentiousness of the age — rather had increased it.

There was little basis of hope for the future in the educational or religious influences of the time. There were no public schools; nothing for the education of the common people; nothing for the education of any, except in two arts, that of the gymnast and that of the orator. The temples were often nesting-places of vice and never nursing-places of virtue. There was no real attempt to make men better through religion. Religion was sometimes a fashionable pastime, sometimes a superstitious propitiation of the gods, never an ethical incentive to or endeavor after practical righteousness. The religion of the temples had no

relation to the moral life of the people. It did not even attempt to make the world a better world, and it made no pretense to do so. Philosophy was sometimes moral; religion was unmoral, and often immoral.

Such was the society upon which Paul looked. Not that there were not some fair women and some brave men and some attempts at reformation and a better life. But they were individual, unorganized, and ineffectual. Government was an absolute despotism; labor was servile and degraded; society was given over to licentiousness and self-indulgence; the family was in fragments; popular education there was none; and the object of the religious institutions was to appease the wrath of angry gods or bribe corruptible ones, not to make men righteous.

It is to a Christian church in the metropolis of an empire in such a state of society that Paul writes his epistle to the Romans. And his first word to them is this: The world cannot be made better by law. Rome had one virtue left—law; it had power to enforce law; and from time to time emperors had endeavored by law to stay the tide of corruption which was eating out the life of the empire. Paul's first word to his Roman Christians is that human law is a vain reliance. You once knew God, he says, and you have left him. You once knew righteousness, and you have abandoned it. Rome has been a republic and maintained law; it is now an empire and maintains

law; it is itself the mother of law; and this is what law has done for Rome and the Romans.

“And as they thought fit to cast out God from their knowledge, God gave them over to an outcast mind, to do those things which are not fit; being filled with all unrighteousness, villainy, covetousness, maliciousness; being full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; secret maligners, open defamers, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful; who knowing the sentence of God, that they who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them.”¹

This has sometimes been treated as though it were Paul's picture of human nature. It is not. It is a picture of pagan society in the first century, and it is a true picture of that society. It shows what mankind had come to, when the only force which they knew was the force of a stronger will over them in a despotic and authoritative government. Law had broken down absolutely and entirely, and society had gone to decay.

Then Paul imagines the Jew rejoicing in this indictment of the pagan and saying, This is a true picture of paganism; this is what we have always said the heathen are. And to this imagined Jew Paul replies: You are not to be saved by circumcision, nor because you belong to Israel. There is not one law for you and one law for the pagans.

· 1 Rom. i. 28-32.

God will render to every man, Jew or pagan, according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life: that is, wherever a man has honestly, sincerely, earnestly sought the higher life, and has done so, not by forms and ceremonies, but by patient continuance in well-doing, God bestows upon him the life he seeks.

There is nothing he demands save the earnest and sincere desire; if the pagan has the desire he will have the life, and if the Jew has not the desire he will not have the life. For as human law has not saved, so neither has divine law saved. Israel has had the divine law — has had it flashed on the people from Mount Sinai; has had it enforced by divine providence, rewarding obedience, and punishing disobedience. And what has the divine law done for Israel? This is Paul's answer: —

Are we better than they? No, in no wise. As we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written: —

There is none righteous, no, not one;

There is none that understandeth,

There is none that seeketh after God;

They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable;

There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one:

Their throat is an open sepulchre;

With their tongues they have used deceit:

The poison of asps is under their lips:

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness :
Their feet are swift to shed blood ;
Destruction and misery are in their ways ;
And the way of peace have they not known :
There is no fear of God before their eyes.¹

There is no one place in the Old Testament which contains all these passages. It is as though Paul had picked out the texts in the Old Testament which condemn the Jews and combined them in one terrible indictment of Israel.²

Thus by two object-lessons Paul undertakes to prove that the world cannot be made better by law. Rome has tried human law, — that has failed ; the Jewish nation has tried divine law, — that has failed. For it is not the object of law, whether human or divine, to make the world better.

Law has divine uses ; but it is not remedial, it is not medicinal. Law furnishes a standard of righteousness, by which a man may compare himself in determining whether he is righteous, but it has no power to make him righteous. It is like the standard yardstick at Washington ; by it cloth may be measured, but it cannot make of thirty-four inches of cloth a yard ; for that the cloth must be sent to the loom, that the added cloth may be woven. Law, Mr. Moody has said, is like a looking-glass ; the looking-glass shows one that his face is dirty, but he does not take the looking-glass to

¹ Rom. iii. 9–18. Rev. Version.

² The quotations are from Ps. xiv. 2–4 ; v. 9 ; cxl. 3 ; x. 7 ; Prov. i. 16 ; Isaiah lix. 7, 8 ; Ps. xxxvi. 1.

wash his face with. Law also may restrain a man from injuring his neighbor or even from injuring himself; but it cannot make him a useful man. It may make him harmless, but it cannot make him beneficent. Law is like a strait-jacket; we may confine a violent lunatic in it, for his own or others' safety, but a strait-jacket will do nothing to restore to him his reason. "We know," says the writer of the letters to Timothy, "that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for men-stealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to healthful teaching."¹ By law comes the knowledge of sin; by law restraint from certain of the worse forms of sin; but by law does not come reformation of character or redemption from sin.

Law is not God's method for the cure of evil-doing or of evil character: this is Paul's first affirmation. So to use it is to misuse it. In vain do we think to promote temperance by putting the word prohibition into a state constitution, or to promote religion by putting the word God into a national constitution. The worst forms of self-indulgent appetite may be held in check by law; but the grace of self-control never can be imparted

¹ 1 Timothy i. 8, 9.

by law, however vigorously and successfully enforced. Profanity may be checked by law, but reverence can never be created nor cultivated by law. In vain do the Puritans close the theatres; Cromwell dies, the Cavaliers come back into power, and the drama of the reign of Charles II. is the worst drama England ever saw. Neither by human law nor by divine law, neither by written law on tables of stone or unwritten law in the conscience, can the world be set right. By the deeds of the law, — that is, by doing what law commands, — can no flesh be rightened in God's sight.

How then can it be rightened? Paul's answer to that question will form the subject for consideration in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS — II

PAUL, as we have seen, takes issue with the fundamental principle of Judaism. That principle may be stated in a sentence as obedience to law. He declares that religion does not consist in obedience to law. Obedience to law results from religion; but religion is not attained by means of such obedience. Obedience is not righteousness, nor is it the road to righteousness. Commentators on Paul have sometimes tried to break the force of his contention by distinguishing between the moral and the ceremonial law. They have said that the ceremonial law is abolished by Christ, but that the moral law continues; that it is not by obedience to the ceremonial law that the world can be saved, but by obedience to the moral law. But Paul makes no such distinction. His statement is broad, radical, and comprehensive. By the deeds of the law, he says, shall no flesh be justified in God's sight. Having illustrated and enforced this fundamental but negative proposition by the experience, first of the pagan, then of the Jewish world, he proceeds to set forth, in language so condensed as to be enigmatical, what is, in his belief, the remedy for sin.

This statement, in the form with which the English reader will be most familiar with it — that of the Old Version — is as follows : —

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe : for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.¹

Putting this declaration into a single brief sentence, it may be epitomized thus : By obedience to law no man can be justified ; he can be justified only by receiving the free gift of God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, whom the Father hath set forth as a propitiation. What does Paul mean by this ? What he means by the statement that the world cannot be justified by the deeds of the law I tried to show in the preceding chapter. What does he mean by the statement that it can be justified through the free gift of God's righteousness, received by faith in Jesus

¹ Rom. iii. 20-26.

Christ, as a propitiation? In this question four questions are involved: First, what does Paul mean by "justified"? Second, what does he mean by "God's righteousness"? Third, what does he mean by "faith"? Fourth, what does he mean by "propitiation"?

What does Paul mean by the statement that man is "justified"? It is an infelicity in our translation that the words "justification" and "righteousness" are used to translate the same Greek word. We should get the color of Paul's meaning better if we were to bring back into the English language a word which has become almost obsolete, and were to say that men are to be rightened by God's righteousness. What, then, does Paul mean by saying we are to be rightened or justified?

Sin produces two different effects on the human soul. It disorders the soul itself and it estranges the soul from God. If there were no God, still sin would be an awful thing in the disorder which it produces in the individual and in society. And these two effects intellectually and philosophically may be regarded separately; but they are in fact one and the same effect. Intellectually and philosophically we may discriminate; vitally and really they are identical. A little child disobeys the mother, pouts, is angry, cries. The crying shows the discomfort and the disorder within. The mother takes the child into her lap. The child struggles to get away, jumps down, and runs away again, showing estrangement between the child

and the mother. The same thing that disorders the child separates the child from the mother. The two things may be treated separately in thought, but in life they are always the same. It is impossible that this child should be pouting, disobedient, ugly, cross, and at the same time be drawn toward the mother whom it is disobeying. It will be estranged from the mother as long as it is disobedient to her. The two effects are one. The prodigal son called upon his father to give him his portion, then went into a far country and spent it in riotous living. The two things are dramatically represented separately. But the going away from the father into a far country, and the spending there his substance in riotous living, are in fact one and the same experience. The boy could not have lived at home in peace with his father, enjoying his father, at one with his father, if he was living a vicious, degraded, riotous life. He must be separated from his father if he is living in impurity and his father is pure.

As the two effects of sin are one, so the two remedies are one. We may separate them in our thought, but they are not separable in fact. We may consider the child reconciled to the mother, or we may consider the child smoothing out the brow, ceasing to cry, drawing in the pouting lips, no longer wretched because she is no longer willful and disobedient. But the two experiences of self-reconciliation and reconciliation with the mother are really identical. The moment the child ceases

to be disobedient, the moment love comes back into the child, that moment the child is ready to climb into the mother's lap. Nor is it ready to climb into the mother's lap and take the mother's caress and be at one with the mother so long as it is disobedient to her. The same moral process that brings peace to this child brings the child to the mother. So in the parable of the prodigal son it is said, When he came to himself, he said, I will arise and go to my father. The coming to himself was vitally one with going back to his father. The going back to his father inevitably accompanied his coming to himself. The two are separable in statement, but they are one in fact.

The Christian Church has been divided for centuries on the theological question whether Paul means by "justification" reconciled to God or reconciled within ourselves. Does it mean, God declares him to be right or God makes him right? But if the above view is correct, the two are one and the same. It is impossible that God should declare a man to be right when God sees him to be wrong. That would make God a liar. Because he sees in the penitent the beginning of righteousness, he accepts it as righteousness, recognizes it, fosters it, develops it. To the question, then, What is meant by the statement, Man is justified or rightened? the answer is, He is both reconciled with God and reconciled with himself. The beginning of righteousness is in him, and therefore the reconciliation between him and God is accomplished. He ceases

to pout *and* he climbs into his mother's lap. He comes to himself *and* he returns to the father. The two acts are one and the same act.

A similar discussion has taken place respecting the words "the righteousness of God." Some theologians have said that the righteousness of God means a gift which God bestows on men; others have said that it means an attribute or quality of God. But these two, also, are one and the same. We can regard them from different points of view, but they are not in fact separable. Philosophically different, they are virtually one; in thought different, in reality one. The righteousness of God is God's own character which he gives. He does not impart something apart from himself; he imparts himself, and there is no grace of character in himself which he is not ready to impart. God gives his own life to men; he pours himself into men. So that, when Paul says we are rightened by God's righteousness, what he says is this: We are made right in ourselves, and we are brought into right relationship by God, because God will pour *himself* into us the moment we are willing to receive him.

The third question is, What is meant by "faith"? Man is not justified by law, he is justified by faith. Here again our English language misleads us. We have the noun "faith," but no verb corresponding to it. So we either have to say "belief" and "believe," or else we have to say "faith" and then the awkward circumlocution,

“possess faith” or “exercise faith”; or else we have to do what we have done in our English Bible, say “faith” when we use the noun and “believe” when we use the verb. In general, the verb “believe” in the New Testament corresponds to the word “faith” in the New Testament—that is, one is the verbal, the other the noun form. When Paul says we are to believe in Jesus Christ, he says that we are to have faith in Christ. What does he mean by this faith?

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, who, if not Paul himself, was a disciple of Paul, teaching essentially Pauline theology, has given us a definition of faith. “Faith,” he says, “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.” Faith as thus defined is the perception of the invisible and the eternal. Paul himself has given, what is not in terms but is in reality, a definition of faith: While we look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal.¹ Faith then is looking upon the invisible and eternal world. But it is more than looking, it is perceiving; and perceiving spiritual truth is possible only by receiving spiritual life. The life is perceived only by receiving it. A thoroughly dishonest man cannot understand honesty. A thoroughly impure person cannot understand purity. A thoroughly selfish person cannot comprehend the splendor of self-sacrifice. It is only as we live that

¹ Heb. xi. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 18.

we see life. The seeing and the perceiving are different phases of the same experience.

What Paul says, then, is this: The world is to be set right by receiving God's free gift of himself. Belief is a purely intellectual act. Faith is also an act of the will. It is the substance of things hoped for as well as the evidence of things unseen. We look — and we do not look without the will directing our eyes that we may look — we *look* at the things which are unseen. They are not forced upon us; we deliberately turn our attention toward them. This is the difference between a creed and a confession of faith: A creed is the statement of an intellectual opinion — I think God is. A confession of faith is the acceptance of God — I receive him as my Father.

The fourth question is, What does Paul mean by "propitiation": "Christ Jesus whom God hath set forth as a propitiation"? It is right to say that my answer to this question does not accord with that generally given by orthodox teachers and orthodox commentators; for this reason, I state the grounds on which my answer is based. The word rendered "propitiation"¹ in this passage is one used throughout the Greek version of the Old Testament to designate the Mercy Seat. The Temple at Jerusalem was composed of several

¹ *ἱλαστήριον*. Used only here and Heb. ix. 5, in N. T. In Hebrews it is rendered "mercy seat," and it is the word used in the septuagint to designate the Mercy Seat. Exod. xxv. 17, 22; xxvi. 34; xl. 20; Lev. xvi. 2, 13; Num. vii. 89.

courts surrounding a central sanctuary which was divided into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Behind the curtain which veiled this Holy of Holies from profane view was the Ark of the Covenant, and over this Ark of the Covenant a lid or cover, guarded by the cherubim, known as the Mercy Seat. Within this Holy of Holies God was supposed in some special sense to reside, or at least to come to it from time to time ; and once a year, on a great solemn occasion, the High Priest, and he alone, was permitted to lift the curtain, enter into the Holy of Holies, and there meet Jehovah at the Mercy Seat. I understand Paul, then, to use this figure — certainly he would have been so understood, it seems to me, by all Jewish readers. When he says that Jesus Christ is a *hilasteerion*, he would be understood by his readers to mean that Jesus Christ is the Mercy Seat.¹ Of olden time only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and there once a year meet in fellowship with God. But now the veil is drawn aside, and Jesus Christ is the Mercy Seat. He walked among men, open and welcome to the poorest and the humblest. There came to him little children, and he took them in his arms ; the lepers came, and he touched them ; there was no one so poor, so wretched, no one so sinful, that he might not go

¹ The reason assigned by Alford for thinking he means propitiatory offering or victim, a meaning never given elsewhere in the Bible to this word, is the accompanying phrases, through faith “in his blood,” and “to declare his righteousness,” both of which phrases he thinks indicates a victim.

to Christ and receive the touch of healing, and hear the word, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Even the lost woman whom we will not allow to enter our household, might wash his feet with her tears. Through him who welcomed all men, all men may come to God. "I am not ashamed," says Paul, "of the gospel of Christ, for therein is God's righteousness revealed from faith to faith." What is it that is revealed in that gospel? What do the four Gospels give us? The story of a life, the portrait of a man, the revelation of a person. In this life, this man, this person, Paul says, God's righteousness is revealed. Would you know God's true character? Read that story, see how Christ lived, how he loved, how he sacrificed himself, how he cared for men, what he was, and then understand that this is our God; this Christ shows what kind of righteousness God possesses; not a righteousness that must be satisfied by blood in order that he may be appeased, but a righteousness that comes down from heaven to earth and fills the earth with the glory of his self-sacrifice that he may gather men to himself.

I ask the reader, then, to turn again to Paul's statement of his understanding of the divine remedy for sin, and re-read it, in the light of the answer I have given to these four questions: What does Paul mean by "justified"? by "God's righteousness"? by "faith"? and by "Mercy Seat"? And for the better understanding of Paul's statement, as I interpret it, I give it here in a para-

phrase, which avoids the use of certain words to which long theological controversies have imparted a meaning which I believe is foreign to Paul's original thought.

"Therefore righteousness does not proceed from¹ doing deeds required by law; not thus can any flesh be rightened in his sight. For through law² is knowledge of sin. But in these latter days,³ without law God's righteousness is manifested, that same righteousness to which the law and the prophets bare witness; that is, God's righteousness, — given through faith in the Messiah, unto all those who exercise faith.⁴ For there is no difference; for all have sinned and all fall short of God's glorious image;⁵ being rightened freely by his gift through that deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth openly, as a Mercy Seat, by whom we have access to the Father through faith in his blood;⁶ thus serving to demonstrate his righteousness in the passing over, in God's forbearance of past transgressions, and demonstrating⁷ his righteousness at this present

¹ ἐκ indicates source or origin of righteous character.

² Not *the* law: the statement is generic.

³ νυν, adverb of time, as indicated by parallel expression below.

⁴ In contrast with "through law," which could be only for Jews.

⁵ See Rom. viii. 18, 21; 1 Cor. xi. 7; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Phil. iii. 21.

⁶ In the Law a Mercy Seat, behind a veil, which only the High Priest could enter, once a year, and by the shedding of blood; in the Gospel a Mercy Seat open before all; to which all have access, at all times, with no shedding of blood other than that which Christ has shed. Comp. Heb. ix. 1-14.

⁷ εἰς ἐνδεῖξιν indicates *tendency*; πρὸς ἐνδεῖξιν indicates *ultimate end*.

time ; that he might be seen to be ¹ both righteous himself and the rightener of him whose righteousness proceeds from ² faith in Jesus." ³

I understand, then, Paul as recognizing certain moral laws, interpreted more or less imperfectly by the Mosaic statutes, by human enactments, and by the voice of conscience in the individual, and saying that it is not by endeavoring to shape our lives into conformity with these ideals, not by saying to ourselves we will not steal, nor kill, nor commit adultery, nor slander our neighbor, because law forbids, but will go to church and pay decorous reverence to God, and keep his Sabbath day because law requires, — not by any such method can any individual make himself righteous ; not thus can society be reformed and purified. God's method of reform is wholly other than this. He is one who comes to earth, searches men out, suffers in their suffering, bears the burden of their sinning, and offers to fill them with himself that they may become like him. To see that God is such as this ; to believe in him, open the heart to him, receive him, long to be like him ; to love

¹ This whole paragraph is dealing with the *manifestation* to mankind of God. The meaning is not that he might be righteous notwithstanding he rightens, but that he might be seen to possess a righteousness which rightens.

² ἐκ πίστεως in contrast with ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, verse 20. These two parallel phrases frame in the paragraph and indicate its object, to set forth the contrast between the two types of righteousness — the legal and the spiritual.

³ Rom. iii. 20-26.

as he loves, serve as he serves, pity as he pities, suffer as he suffers, and redeem as he redeems — this is to live ; and he who in his aspirations and desires begins thus to live is at one with God. “Thus reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.”¹

This understanding of Paul’s meaning is so far different from that which has been most commonly entertained, that, before proceeding to apply it to the further interpretation of his letter to the Romans, I may be allowed to state more fully the philosophy which underlies it.

The greatest and most vital power in influencing life is personality. It is greater than law, instruction, or example. Indeed, all three have their chief value because of the personality which lies behind them, of which they are manifestations. Law manifests primarily the will of the lawgiver ; instruction, primarily, the intellect of the instructor ; example, both intellect and will in life. This power of personality it is which makes the great orator. We call it magnetism, so concealing our ignorance. Why is it that one preacher fastens the attention of his congregation upon him with his opening sentence and holds it to the close, while another, as learned, as skilled in rhetoric and elocutionary arts, does but lull them to sleep ? It is the man behind the speech which makes the orator. This is the power that makes the great leader.

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The Little Corporal, catching up the banner at the Bridge of Lodi and dashing before his hesitating soldiers, fires them with such enthusiasm that they sweep past him, despite the raking fire from the other end, and carry it by an irresistible onslaught. This is the power that enables Sheridan, riding late upon the battlefield of Winchester, to turn his fleeing soldiers back, and transform their rout into victory. This is the power of the great statesmen, the great moral leaders, and the great captains of industry, who are able to imbue those about them with their own courage, their own spirit of faith, or hope, or patience, or energy, and so give new life to a great industrial organization, or a nation, or an epoch. This is the power of the mother, who goes softly down to that door which swings both ways on its hinges, not knowing whether she shall receive a new life from the unknown, or shall herself go out into the unknown to return no more. She takes this new life and gives herself to it. She did love music; now the only songs she sings are lullabies. She did love literature; now the only stories she cares for are those which baby listens to. She was fond of society; now the society of the little one, whose eyes look wonderingly into hers, is the only society she cares for. She governs, she educates, she illustrates by her example, but, far more than all, she pours herself into the life intrusted to her. By her courage she makes him strong, by her hope she inspires him; her purity cleanses, her love vivifies. She gives

herself in sickness and in health, in weakness and in strength, in toil and in play, rejoicing in the self-immolation which is self-exaltation, looking for no other reward than that which shall be hers when by and by she shall walk the streets resting on his arm and looking up into the face which once looked from her lap up into hers. What Paul affirms is that God is the great personality; that he gives himself to his children; that more than the law which is the utterance of his will, more than the science which is the manifestation of his wisdom, more even than the earthly life of Jesus, which is the example set by the human life of God, is his own personality, imparted to all who wish to be like him, and to receive him as the source of their life.

There were in the time of Paul two conceptions of God in sharp contrast with which he sets forth his conception, derived from his faith in Jesus Christ as the Mercy Seat through whom we have access to the unknown Father. To the Greeks and Romans the gods were simply gigantic deified men. In the Hartz Mountains, it is said, the traveler sometimes sees a gigantic apparition before him. He reaches out his hand toward the apparition. The apparition offers his in return. He shakes his fist at the apparition. The apparition responds with like threatening gesture. Then he sees that what has startled him is but his own image reflected from the clouds. Such reflections of themselves the Greeks and Romans worshiped. Their gods

were cruel, vengeful, malignant, sensual, lying, thieving. All the current vices of the time were reflected in these deities. What is, perhaps, the greatest tragedy of ancient Greek literature, "Prometheus Bound," turns on the jealousy of Jove and his wrath against Prometheus because he had given to mortal man the gift of fire, which belonged only to the gods. When men thus worshiped immoral and vicious deities, the first and most necessary message to mankind was that given by Judaism, that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; that he is a just and righteous God; that he is indignant with sin, and will not endure it; that his laws are holy, just, and pure, and that men disobey those holy, just, and pure laws at the peril of their lives. But this message was insufficient for the world's redemption. It presented a conception of God far superior in moral quality and in moral effects to the conception of paganism; and the moral life of Judaism was far superior to the moral life of Rome. But it only vaguely hinted at the hope derived from faith in a life-giving God. Paul perceived in Christ a fuller and a higher revelation. He perceived in Christ the truth that God possesses a righteousness which looks upon iniquity in order that he may cure it; that he cannot bear sin, and therefore will banish it by the ministry of his patient love; that his fires of indignation are beneficent fires which burn out the evil only to purify and preserve the good. Paul perceived that the love which sends a pure woman

into a noisome and pestilential district that she may carry to it her purity, is a higher form of righteousness than that of the policeman who goes only to administer the law and inflict penalty. He saw in Christ revealed the truth that God has a righteousness which itself rightens all those who have faith in him.

One pathetic incident in the life of Christ illustrates strikingly the contrast between the Christian and the Pharisaic conception of righteousness. Christ had been invited by a Pharisee to dine with him. The Jewish houses were built around an open square, and the dining-room was often a kind of porch which opened on this square. In such a room as this Christ reclined at the table in Oriental fashion, his naked feet stretched forth behind him. The villagers, with the freedom of Oriental manners, had crowded into the courtyard to listen to the conversation of the great Rabbi. One woman of the town, emboldened by her despair, had crowded beyond the rest and stood close by the Master. Something he said rekindled in the ashes of her life a long-lost desire. Some sacred memories of the past, some wistful but despairing hope of the future, stirred within her. The tears welled to her eyes and fell in great drops on the naked feet before her. Startled that tears from such eyes should fall on such feet, she knelt, and, having nothing else, with the tresses of her hair wiped the polluting drops away. Then she covered them with kisses, and, finding herself un-

resisted, took from her bosom a box of precious ointment, and, breaking it, anointed the feet with the ointment. The Pharisee said, This man is no prophet, or he would have known what manner of woman this is, for she is a sinner. But Christ turned to the woman and said, Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace. The Pharisee could not then — alas! the Pharisee cannot now — understand the higher righteousness which welcomes the first beginnings of penitence in an apparently lost life, and by love recovers the lost and exorcises the evil.

This, then, I understand to be Paul's doctrine: The Jew held that righteousness consists in obedience to law. Paul says, No, it does not consist in obedience to law; it consists in the reception of a divine life. Germs of this teaching are to be found in the Old Testament; in, for example, the Twenty-fourth Psalm: ¹ —

Who dare ascend to worship on the mountain of Yahveh;
Who dare to set foot on his holy abode?
He who has sinless hands and a pure conscience,
Who cherishes no longing for evil and never swears falsely,
He will receive blessing from Yahveh,
And righteousness from God his help.

But Paul carries this revelation of the goodness of God further than the Hebrew psalmist. For he shows that this mercy, this goodness, this loving-kindness, is not dependent upon man's having obeyed the divine law, upon his having "sinless

¹ Mr. Furness's translation in the Polychrome Bible. I put a comma after the word "falsely" where he puts a period.

hands and a pure conscience;" it is dependent only upon his choosing goodness and virtue, and his desire to receive them from God through Jesus Christ, his Son.

Now let the reader open his New Testament, preferably the Revised Version, and with Paul's letter to the Romans before him, apply the general principle above stated to the elucidation of the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters.

Having defined the gospel remedy for sin as life in God, not obedience to law, and the secret of that life as the reception of God's free gift through faith, Paul shows, first, that this is in accordance with the history of Israel. Abraham had faith in God, and this faith was counted unto him for righteousness. David describes the blessings of the man unto whom God does not impute his sin, because he has confessed it and turned from it. And this blessedness is not dependent upon circumcision, for the circumcision followed after the faith and after the righteousness had been conferred. It was a sign of the fulfillment of the promise, not a condition of the bestowment of the gift.¹ Thus we are rightened by faith, and, being thus rightened, we accept, not with submission only, but with gladness, tribulation, because tribulation is the divine means of working out that divineness of character in us which, if we are living a life of faith, is our chief desire. This gift of life through faith is not confined to the

¹ Rom. iv.

Jews. For sin is not confined to the Jews ; sin dates from Adam, and is as universal as the human race ; and the remedy which Christ brings is as universal as the disease ; the forgiveness is as wide in its scope as the mercy. If through one man's disobedience many were made sinners, through the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Where sin abounded God's free gift did more exceedingly abound.¹ Then, says an imaginary objector, we would better continue in sin that grace may continue to abound. Such an objector, Paul replies, does not understand the nature of sin and death, nor of grace and life. If we are living the life of faith, we are dead to sin ; we no longer desire to go on with it ; the very essence of life is a supreme desire for righteousness. How, then, can a man who is living the life of faith, that is, the life which chooses righteousness, choose to go on in sin ? When we have come into vital, sympathetic relations with Jesus Christ, we have become, in our desires and aspirations, dead to sin, as Jesus Christ was dead to sin ; and alive only to righteousness, as Jesus Christ was alive to righteousness. Redemption is the summons of Christ to a new life and the obedience of the soul to that summons ; it is the proclamation of emancipation to a slave, and the accept-

¹ Rom. v. His object in this chapter is not to show the origin of sin, or its nature, — that he does in the seventh chapter ; incidentally he traces sin back to Adam, but only to show that the remedy must be wider than the law because sin preceded the giving of the law.

ance by the slave of liberty; it is deliverance from the world to which the soul was married, and its marriage to a new lord — even Christ. Those entirely mistake the very nature of redemption who suppose that it is a contrivance by which men who are sinners here may get into heaven hereafter. It is a divine method by which the dead may live, the enslaved may be emancipated, the soul may be wedded to and made participator in the Christ life on earth.¹

Having stated his philosophy, having shown its historical foundation in Abraham and David, having shown its effect on the problem of suffering, having answered the objections, Paul passes, by one of those transitions so common with him, into a personal experience, or at least what is in form a personal experience. I was the other day at the house of a friend, who showed me a wonderful statue of Shakespeare, modeled by Ward, the sculptor, and he told me that when Ward models his statue he first makes in clay the skeleton, and then on the skeleton he builds up the nerves and arteries and muscles, and then clothes them with flesh. Thus Paul lays, in an analysis of spiritual development, the anatomical foundation of the creation he is to set before us. We may strip away the flesh and blood and nerve and muscle from this living statue that Paul puts before us, and, if we do, we shall find beneath it a wonderful analysis of spiritual development. And then, if we take

¹ Rom. vi. 1-vii. 6.

up the narrative again, we shall find that he has clothed that analysis with living flesh and breathed into it the breath of a personal life.

Once, he says, I was dead in sin. I was living a sinful life, and did not even know that it was sinful. The law came to me. It said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' Then first I learned that I was doing wrong in nourishing my evil desires. But still I went on with the wrong, knowing it to be wrong. And so, through the law, the sin that before was pardonable became exceeding sinful. I began to struggle against the sin, but I was under the domination of the flesh, sold like a slave, and I struggled in vain. I was an enigma to myself; what I was doing I could not comprehend. What I wished to do I hated to do. What I hated in myself I did continually. I was two men. There was an evil spirit in me that mastered me. More and more clearly I perceived the right, and still I did the wrong. I was at war with myself. I was a slave to the law of sin, from which I in vain struggled to be free. I was like a captive bound to a dead body; from the corpse I could not disentangle myself.¹ I was wretched, until I learned that God measures man, not by his achievements, but by his aspirations and desires; not by what he does, but by the purpose which animates him, and the end which he pursues. I learned that those who follow after the spirit are not under condemnation; that they have the fellowship and the friendship of

¹ Rom. vii. 8-25. For paraphrase of this chapter see ante, p. 25.

God ; that this, on the one hand, is sufficient to secure God's friendship, and, on the other hand, his friendship and his fellowship can be secured in no other way. If one pursues the flesh, he is at enmity with God. If he pursues the spirit, he is in fellowship with God. And if he thus pursues the spirit, if Christ is in him, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive, and at last the spirit will triumph over the flesh, and even the flesh itself will become an instrument of righteousness.¹ For not those who do righteousness, in obedience to an external law of God, are his sons, but those who follow after righteousness, being led by his spirit, — they are the sons of God. The spirit which the gospel gives is not a spirit of bondage to law, but the spirit of adoption which leads us to see in God, not an awful Judge, Sovereign, and Lawgiver, but a dear Father, whom we may call with the familiarity of childhood, *Abba*, that is, *Papa*. And we know that we are children, because of the intimacy of our spirit with his Spirit. And if we are children, then we are heirs of God, inheriting him, and we are joint heirs with Christ, and we shall be conformed to him. And if we suffer, it is only that our suffering may work out in us an eternal weight of glory.

“ For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the unveiling of the sons of God. For the creation was

¹ Rom. viii. 11. It is not of a future physical resurrection Paul is here speaking, but of a life in which the body itself becomes subject to the spirit.

made subject to decay, not of its own will, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in the hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only so, but also we ourselves, though we possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the sonship, even for the deliverance of our body. For by hope are we saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for that which he sees? but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”¹

And what this hope is that cheers, sustains, illumines, and inspires, Paul makes clear:—

“Whom he did foreknow he also did foreordain to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did foreordain, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also rightened; and whom he rightened, them he also glorified.”²

God has foreseen in man a possibility which men never see in one another nor in themselves—a possibility of being finally so conformed to the image of Christ that Christ will be but as the first-born among many brethren; so that they will be in the Father as Christ is in the Father, and have given to them through him the glory which the Father gave to the Son. And, foreseeing this possibility, the Father determines to make it a reality,

¹ Rom. viii. 19–25.

² Rom. viii. 29, 30.

and, determined to make it a reality, he calls humanity to him that he may achieve this result in them ; and, having called them to him, he rightens them ; and, bringing them to himself, and bringing order out of their moral chaos in themselves and rightening them, he will glorify them and finally present them faultless before the throne of his grace with exceeding great glory. Secure in his faith and in this hope of a life which is begun, carried on, and ended in God, nothing can discourage or dishearten the apostle.

“ If God be for us, who can be against us ? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? Who shall bring any charge against those whom God has chosen ? Shall God — he who has rightened us ? Who shall condemn ? shall Christ — he who has died, yea, rather has risen again, who is at the right hand of God and pleads our cause ? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall affliction, or straits, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword of the executioner ? As it is written, ‘ For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us ; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” ¹

More than conquerors ! Napoleon, landing from

¹ Rom. viii. 31-39.

the island of Elba, met detachment after detachment of troops sent out to capture him; and as they came to the Little Corporal, they wheeled round in line behind him and swelled his forces as he marched to Paris. The man who sees in Christ Jesus the Mercy Seat, the man who believes that God is in the world setting the world right, the man who believes that God is in his own heart setting his own heart right and working with him — that man finds all the foes and enemies of his life converted and made his friends: the temptations strengthen him, the sorrows enrich him, the loneliness brings him nearer to the companionship of God; his very sins, failures, and shortcomings reveal to him the infinite mercy of the Father; and already here in this life he looks forward to the time when he shall awake in Christ's likeness and be satisfied; yea, when Christ himself shall look upon him and say, "I am satisfied."¹

¹ Ps. xvii. 15; 1 John iii. 2; Isaiah liii. 11.

XIII

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS — III

THAT portion of Paul's Epistle to the Romans which is contained in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters is confessedly the most difficult portion in all his writing. It is difficult by reason of the nature of the theme, — the relation of law to liberty, or sovereignty to human freedom. It is difficult by reason of Paul's treatment of that subject, for his arguments are in a measure archaic, — effective in their time, ineffective now, and, as it were, out of date. It is difficult by reason of the fact that, in America, where individualism has received its highest development, and where popular sovereignty has become a popular cry, there is a disinclination to recognize any sovereignty but popular sovereignty, any law above that which men make for themselves, anything greater than human free will. The difficulty is enhanced still further by the fact that the divine sovereignty has been presented oftentimes in pagan and cruel forms as a harsh, arbitrary, unreasonable, and unjust sovereignty.¹ This passage is made still

¹ Professor Jowett well puts the antithesis between the reasonable and the unreasonable form of faith in sovereignty: "A

more difficult by the fact that Paul himself in these three chapters is seen passing through an intellectual transition. He interprets the change taking place in his own mind from the narrower to the larger view of sovereignty. He argues with himself; we see the mental processes, and therefore the mental contradictions, of a mind working its way toward the truth.

The most difficult problem, perhaps, in philosophy is the relation of liberty to law, or human freedom to the power that lies beyond and above humanity. Within ourselves we are conscious of freedom. We choose, and we know that we choose. In vain is it argued that the will must be determined by the strongest motive, that man's will is but like a balance which inclines whichever way the weight is heaviest. Within ourselves we are conscious that we choose, and our whole sense of moral responsibility toward God and toward one another rests upon that consciousness. And yet, on the other hand, we see and know that there are forces outside ourselves which both mould and direct us. We know that there is a Providence

religious mind feels the difference between saying 'God chose me; I cannot tell why; not for any good that I have done; and I am persuaded that he will keep me to the end;' and saying: 'God chooses men quite irrespective of their actions, and predestines them to eternal salvation;' and yet more if we add the other half of the doctrine, 'God refuses men quite irrespective of their actions, and they become reprobates, predestined to everlasting damnation.' The first is the expression of a Christian life, the latter of a religious philosophy which has ceased to walk by faith." — Jowett's *Commentary on Romans*, p. 500.

which shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may. Our greatest dramas recognize this, our greatest philosophers perceive it. Indeed, these forces which lie outside ourselves — I do not stop here to consider whether they are divine or undivine, personal or impersonal — are far more efficient in shaping our lives than we are ourselves. Thus the determination of the question whether one should be born in the first century or in the nineteenth century, in Imperial Rome or republican America, has had a much greater influence on his life than any determination of his. When we should be born, where we should be born, what qualities we should inherit from our ancestry, what should be the formative influences in the most formative period of our life — that of childhood — these and kindred questions we had no share in determining. They have been determined for us. And yet, within the limits determined for us, we know that we are free.

There are, indeed, some schools of philosophy which, in order to simplify truth, deny one or the other factor of this ever unsolved problem. There are, on the one hand, necessarians who deny that man is a free moral agent ; there are, on the other hand, individualists who deny that there are any forces superior to man's will. But it may safely be said that neither the one class of thinkers nor the other have any standing ground in human philosophy. The great mass of men recognize, not only in their schools of philosophy and their reli-

gious systems, but in their dramas, their novels, their whole life, these two factors — law and freedom, sovereignty and liberty — the forces and currents of life without, and the force that lies within. Man may be compared to a traveler on an ocean steamer. He is free. He may walk from the bow of the steamer to the stern, or from the starboard to the larboard side, and yet, walk where he will, the steamer is irresistibly carrying him to his destination. No freedom that he can exercise can change the course of the voyage on which he is embarked. We find ourselves thus embarked on a strange voyage. We do not know from what port we came, nor to what port we tend, and we do not know what are the forces which are carrying our ship, nor the bounds of the ocean on which we sail, nor who is the commander that determines its destiny; but we know, if we know anything, that within the narrow limits of our deck we may walk where we like, and also that, in spite of our walking and whithersoever we walk, we are carried on to the final goal. That we cannot control.

This sovereignty over life was recognized in Paul's time, as it has been in our times. It was recognized then in three forms, which can here be only very briefly, and therefore very imperfectly, described.

In the first place, by the Stoics — and Stoicism was the only virile philosophy in Rome in the time of Paul. This Stoical philosophy taught that

nature is one great machine ; that each individual man is a little machine ; that his course of life is determined by the way in which he is made and by his relation to the great machine of which he is a part. Whatever is, must be — that was the doctrine of Stoicism.¹ It was simple necessarianism.

There was, in the second place, the doctrine of fate, as it was portrayed by the Greek dramatists. While fate was represented by the Greek as not less inexorable than destiny by the Stoic, it was very different in its character. Fate was personified in certain deities, and yet was superior over all deities. It determined the destinies of the gods as well as of men. But it determined them for just ends. The function of fate was to reward the virtuous and to punish the wicked, especially the latter. No skill could evade the Eumenides, no place could hide from these avenging deities. No tears, no prayers, no sacrifices, could avail to propitiate their wrath for wrong which had been done. The penalty must be paid by the man himself, and by his family, and by his descendants. Thus, while the Romans held that there was a fate which was simply materialistic, the Greeks held that there was a fate which was moral, the end of which was the infliction of punishment for sin.

The third form of this faith in sovereignty was that among the Jews, who, no less than the Greeks and the Romans, believed in sovereignty. This belief was essential in the Pharisaic — that is, the

¹ For a fuller account of Stoicism see chap. vi., p. 99.

orthodox — party in Judaism. They believed that all things were determined by the decrees of Jehovah, — the supreme sovereign. Their faith differed from that of the Romans in that it was spiritual ; it differed from that of the Greeks in that it was not merely, nor perhaps even chiefly, punitive. It differed from both in that it was imputed to and invested in an individual, personal God. But this individual, personal God gave no account of himself. He chose whom he chose, and he rejected whom he rejected. His choice was the final factor in life. No one could gainsay his choice, no one could antagonize it successfully, no one could call him to account for it, and no one could explain why he exercised it. He had chosen Abraham and called him out of paganism, and left other pagans in their paganism. He had called Jacob, and left Esau to be the head of the wandering Bedouin tribes. He had called Joseph for honor and glory, and left his brethren for ignoble lives. He had called Moses, and had not only cast out Pharaoh but had used him for his own destruction and for the emancipation and the glorification of Israel. He had chosen David from the sheep-fold, and passed Saul by. So all through the Jewish history the Pharisee thought he could trace a divine sovereignty, which used both men and nations for no reason that was given, for no reason that could be given, using them because the sovereign chose them. God's choice was the ultimate fact.

Thus there were three conceptions of sovereignty current in Paul's time : the necessarian — Whatever is, must be ; the Greek — Fate, ruling both gods and men to punish wrongdoing ; the Pharisaic — The choice of a personal God the final factor in human life.

In these schools Paul was educated. He had come to believe in the sovereignty of what the pagans called fate, or destiny, and to believe in this sovereignty as personified in Jehovah ; and he had grown up to believe that this sovereignty was exercised in an arbitrary way — that is, without any explanation which Jehovah gave to his people or which his people could understand. He had come to believe that Jehovah had chosen Israel, not, as he himself said through one of the old prophets, because they were great or good — for they were the least and feeblest : he chose them because he chose them.¹ This was Paul's primary education. He was steeped and imbued with it. The very fibre of his being was colored by this profound faith in divine sovereignty. And yet he was teaching something that seemed incongruous with this conception. He was declaring that Gentiles might come into the Church of God as well as Jews ; that to the Greek and Roman the door was as wide open as to the orthodox Pharisee ; that the mercy of God in Christ Jesus was as universal as sin. His old faith and his new faith were in apparently irreconcilable conflict one with

¹ Deut. vii. 7, 8.

the other: the old faith that God had chosen a few, and those few Jews, and had given no reason for it; the new faith that God opened wide the door of mercy, that his sun shone alike on the evil and on the good, and his rain fell alike on the just and on the unjust.

Paul was himself in perplexity. He did not himself understand how to reconcile this new faith which was a part of his new life and this old faith which was a part of his old life. He was speaking to a people who, in one form or another, believed in absolute sovereignty: the sovereignty of Jehovah — that was the Pharisaic belief; the supremacy of Fate — that was the Greek belief; the absolute certainty of inexorable necessity — that was the Roman belief. And yet he was saying to them that all men were free to take the gift of God's life. How could he reconcile this largeness of the gospel which he had come to believe in, with this old belief which was almost a part of his very existence? How could he reconcile this belief in the universality of God's mercy with this doctrine of Roman necessarianism, of Greek fate, of Pharisaic election? How could he commend this universalism to those educated in partialism?

Let us recall what he has said already in this letter to the Romans: The world cannot be made right by requiring obedience to law; neither by human enactment nor by divine enactment defining and requiring righteousness. The Roman has tried the one, the Jew has tried the other, and both

have failed. The world must be set right; despotic government made free; labor emancipated; the home purified; society uplifted; education made universal; the church made effective as an ethical instrument; the individual soul transformed — by receiving freely the gift of God's life. He who thus freely receives God's free gift of life will live thereafter a free and spontaneous life; he will be dead to sin, though sometimes he will creep back to his grave, even after he has been raised to newness of life; he will be emancipated from sin, though still the fetters will clank on his wrists and on his feet. Still he will be a new man, and in his pursuit after the new life he will be conscious that he is under no condemnation. God will not condemn him; he will not condemn himself. Rising into this new life, rejoicing in this goodness of God, neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other created thing, can separate him from the love of God, witnessed to his life, wrought in his life.

Then Paul stops. We can imagine that, in his dictation, he has gone as far as he can when he reaches that culmination, and he says to his amanuensis, "I will wait a little." There is clearly a break between the eighth chapter and the ninth. During this break in time, he ponders this question within himself: How is it that this free gift of God is given? How can I reconcile the universality of this gift with my belief in the election of Israel?

How can I commend it to a people who believe either in necessity or in fate or in an arbitrary Jehovah? The ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters are his answer to these questions. They are not written for the purpose of disproving sovereignty — they are not Arminian. They are not written for the purpose of proving sovereignty — they are not Calvinistic. They are not written for the purpose of reconciling sovereignty and free will — they are not philosophical. They are written for the purpose of showing what is the end of the Roman necessity, the Greek fate, the universal sovereignty. To recall for a moment the figure: Paul still believes this steamer is ploughing its way, carrying its passengers; he still believes they can only walk the deck to and fro. He does not discuss the measure and the limits of their liberty; he does not discuss the absoluteness of the sovereignty which determines their voyage. He addresses himself to this one single question: What is the end of the voyage? What is the object of the sovereignty? For what does it exist? Is the Roman right — is it simply a hard, materialistic necessity? Is the Greek right — is it simply the punishment of wrongdoing? Is the Jew right — is it simply an arbitrary choice that cannot be explained?

If we wish to know the meaning of an argument, we must look to its conclusion. No man would undertake to interpret Daniel Webster's reply to Hayne by single sentences taken here and there. He would turn, if he were in perplexity, to the end

of the address, to see to what issue the orator was conducting himself and his hearers, and by the result reached would interpret all that had preceded. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans, in which Paul discusses this relation of sovereignty to freedom, end thus: "God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all." Roman! you are mistaken. This necessity is not a blind materialistic necessity. Greek! you are mistaken. This fate is not for the punishment of wrongdoing. Pharisee! you are mistaken. This is not an arbitrary choice for which no explanation can be given. The end and object of sovereignty, the purpose which it inflexibly maintains, the result which it will achieve, is mercy upon all.

I am aware that this is not the interpretation which has been currently given to these chapters, and therefore I repeat it, that by repetition I may make it clear. Paul, himself believing in sovereignty, and addressing auditors all of whom believe in sovereignty in one form or another, seeks not to define what are the limits of human liberty, nor to overthrow belief in sovereignty, nor to emphasize and establish it; he seeks simply to show what is the end which sovereignty has in view. It is not a dread and inexorable necessity; it is not a fateful destiny seeking to punish the iniquitous; it is not an irresponsible and arbitrary choice; it is a supreme law wrought out by a supreme lover for the accomplishment of universal mercy.

In the light of these general statements I will venture to paraphrase these enigmatical chapters.

Paul begins by affirming his love for Israel. He has not lost that love because he declares that the Jew and the Gentile are alike before God. I say the truth in Christ, he says, in substance, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. I could almost wish myself cast out from Christ. I could almost be willing to be abandoned of him,¹ if so I might bring my kinsmen after the flesh to know him, to love him, and to receive the gift of his life. For they are my kinsmen, and I honor them. Theirs is the adoption and the glory, theirs the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises to the fathers, and from them came the Messiah. Nevertheless, Israel is not made up alone of the children of Abraham. God's children are the children of promise. God has a right to choose whom he will. He could choose Abraham, although Abraham was a pagan. He could choose Jacob and pass by Esau; he could choose Moses and reject Pharaoh. Do you say, What right has he? — to your own Scriptures I refer you. They tell you that man is clay, and God is the potter and may do what he will.² But if he may do what he

¹ Rom. ix. 3. That this is the meaning indicated by the use of the imperfect tense is the view of Alford, Meyer, Winer, Buttmann.

² Rom. ix. 20-23. The figure is borrowed from the Old Testament. Isaiah xxix. 16; lxiv. 8.

will, then he may choose Gentiles as well as Jews. He is not confined in his mercy to Israel; your own prophets tell you so. What says Hosea? "I will call that my people which was not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved."¹ On the other hand, your own prophets tell you Israel may be rejected. Isaiah tells you so: "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah."² What shall we then say? This: If the Gentile opens his heart to receive the life of God, he will have life, and if the Israelite shuts his heart against the Christ of God who brings him life, he will not have life; for God has a right to give life to Gentile as well as to Israel, and is as ready to give it to Gentile as to Israel.

Do I not, then, care for Israel? My brethren, my heart's desire and supplication to God is for them that they may be saved. But how shall they be saved, except by taking the free gift which God gives to all? Moses himself tells you so. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach.³ Your prophets tell you so. There is no difference: Greek and Jew are alike. How, then, is Israel better than the pagans? Because Israel is the missionary nation of the world. Israel is the one appointed to be the almoner of this life. How are

¹ Rom. ix. 25; Hosea ii. 23.

² Rom. ix. 27-29; Isaiah i. 9.

³ Rom. x. 5-9; Lev. xviii. 3-5; Deut. xxx. 11-14.

the pagans to know unless some one tells them? And how shall one tell them unless he be sent? Beautiful are the feet of them on the mountains who bear from Israel glad tidings to the Gentiles.¹

Do I then say that God has cast off Israel? Because I go from the synagogues to preach to the Gentiles, do I say that God has rejected Israel? God forbid. No! God gives his life freely to all. The Israelite who opens his heart to receive the light lives, and the Gentile who opens his heart to receive the light lives; and the Israelite who shuts his heart against the light dies, and the Gentile who shuts his heart against the light dies; there is no difference.² Gentiles, do not boast yourselves, then. Do not you think that you are the chosen and Israel outcast. You owe your life to Israel.³

That is as true now as when Paul wrote this letter to the Romans. We Gentiles owe our life to Israel. It is Israel who has brought us the message that God is one, and that God is a just and righteous God, and demands righteousness of his children, and demands nothing else. It is Israel who has brought us the message that God is our Father. It is Israel who, in bringing us the divine law, has laid the foundation of liberty. It is Israel who had the first free institutions the world ever saw. It is Israel who has brought us our Bible, our prophets, our apostles. It is Israel who brought us our Christ, himself a Jew. When

¹ Rom. x. 14-15; Isaiah lii. 7; Nah. i. 15.

² Rom. xi. 1-11.

³ Rom. xi. 18-26.

sometimes our own unchristian prejudices flame out against the Jewish people, let us remember that all that we have and all that we are we owe, under God, to what Judaism has given us.

Paul affirms a sovereignty, superior to all human will and controlling all human life ; but it is not that of an unintelligent necessity ; not that of a terrible justice pursuing that it may punish ; not that of an arbitrary, irresponsible, and partial Arbiter ; it is a sovereignty whose source is love, whose end is mercy.¹ The great ship in which we are embarked, that comes we know not whence, sails we know not whither, and is under commands that are not interpreted to us, is sailing to the

¹ "The affirmation that God has a Christian purpose toward our entire humanity involves an extension of the field of redemption so enormous as to make obsolete, at a single stroke, the whole theological map of the traditional view. And what seems worse, while all clear-seeing men are aware that this does not necessarily imply universal salvation, it is true that it looks that way. *If God shall succeed*, universal salvation will be the final result. And this sounds so perilous to good morals, and seems to cut the nerve of all strenuous endeavor ! O my brothers, when will Christian thinkers fear atheism more than universalism, when will they see that the deepest immorality lies in distrust of the righteous will of God, when will they awake to the fact that only those who believe in a God for humanity and eternally for humanity can resist unto blood ! Any scheme that puts God with an inclusive and everlasting purpose of redemption behind mankind, looks like universalism ; but let us remember that any other scheme is, in our time, a royal road to atheism. When we assert, as we do so easily, the brotherhood of man, let us be sure that the universe, according to our view, is not against it ; let us be sure that there is in God a universal fatherhood upon which to found it." Rev. George A. Gordon, D. D., in *The New Puritanism*, pp. 163, 164.

harbor of a universal love. Love is Destiny, love is Fate, love is Sovereign. "God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! Of him, through him, unto him, are all things. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER XIV

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS — IV

THE Christian religion is, according to Paul, as we have seen, a new and divine life, freely given by the Father to his children — that gift he calls grace; freely received by the children from the Father, through what he calls faith. Out of this life, thus freely given, there spring outward manifestations in conduct; in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters, and a part of the fifteenth, of Romans Paul interprets to his readers what are the operations of this principle of life, how it works itself out in conduct, what answer this principle of life gives to the questions which men are asking respecting duty. In the first of these chapters he considers the working out of this life in the individual conduct; in the second, its effect upon the relation of the individual to the state; in the third, its bearing on certain questions of casuistry in life. Finally, his letter finished, he writes a postscript of personal salutation and friendship, largely made up of individual greetings. In this postscript he mentions by name twenty-seven individuals, of whom little if anything is known except that they are here mentioned. The fact is significant as indicating that Paul was not a mere philosopher, interested

in systems of truth, nor a mere reformer interested in masses of men and the organization of society, but a personal friend, interested in the welfare of individuals. Passing this postscript without further reference, I ask the reader to consider with me the other three topics : What has Paul to say concerning the practical bearing of his teaching on : 1. The ethical conduct of the individual ; 2. The relation of the individual to the state ; 3. Doubtful and debated questions of casuistry.

1. Religion, according to Paul, is the life of God in the soul of man. Such a life necessarily involves the complete consecration of man to God. He is to give himself wholly in the spirit of love to his Father. "I beseech you," he says, "by the mercies of God that you present even your bodies a living sacrifice." In Jerusalem, and indeed in every heathen city as well, was a temple ; and to this temple sacrifices were brought and laid upon the altar, that thus they might be given to God. So Paul says, we are to give ourselves to God. But this sacrifice is to be a living sacrifice. Both Jew and Gentile slew the sacrifice they offered to God.

□ According to Paul it is not by dying but by living we are to offer ourselves to our Father. Christ had before pointed out the same contrast between true and false religion : "The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy ; I am come that they might have life and might have it more abundantly." ¹ This affords one test for distinguishing

¹ John x. 10.

between true and false religion. Whatever, under any guise of sanctity, purposes to lessen the life of humanity, belongs to the false ; whatever purposes to enlarge and enrich it, belongs to the true. Self-sacrifice is never true sacrifice of self ; it is never real self-immolation. It is always the sacrifice of a lower for a higher phase of life.

As Paul does not recognize any form of self-destruction as a religious act, except as death leads on and up to a resurrection and a higher life, so neither does he recognize any of the too common compromises involved in a partial consecration. He knows nothing of the notion that one tenth of one's income belongs to God and nine tenths to oneself. Tithing as a fixed proportion for what men are pleased to call benevolence is wholly foreign to Paul's conception of religion. All, according to Paul, belongs to God ; how much of that all each one shall spend on his own family, how much in business activities, all of which are immoral if they are not beneficent, and how much on unremunerative benefactions which we call charities, is a question which each child of God must determine for himself according to his circumstances. So Paul knows nothing of the notion that there are some days which belong to God and other days which belong to men. They are all God's. The Sunday is no more truly the Lord's day than Monday ; it is to be used in a different way, but for the same essential purpose. Unconsciously keen was the satire of the little child who

said to her mother, "Was n't it generous of God to give us six days for ourselves and keep only one for himself?" So Paul knows nothing of the popular distinction between religious and secular. To him there are not certain activities which are religious and certain other activities which are not religious; the whole life and all its activities are to be the outcome of the life of God in the soul of man. Religion is thus simply the art of living; I will not even say right living, for any other is not living, according to Paul. When we are in trespasses and sins we are dead.¹

The whole life and all its activities are to be given to God. And in thus giving himself to God, not because he fears a penalty or hopes for a reward, but because he has received God himself into his life and has entered in a new life in God, man gives himself to his fellow-men because the Fatherhood of God carries with it the brotherhood of man, and faith in God as the universal Father involves a perception of humanity as one great family.²

Therefore all the activities of the child of God are to be employed by him as a member of this family and to promote and enrich its life. It is the life of God in Christ, as the head, which binds this family together; therefore he cannot sever himself from the family without severing himself from the life. But in this family all his activities must be, and if he be truly a child of God, will be, spontaneous, free, unforced. Does he preach? he

¹ Ephes. ii. 1.

² Ephes. iii. 14. Rev. Ver.

will preach according to the proportion of his faith — that is, according to the measure of his spiritual experience. Does he give? he will give with liberality. Does he exercise mercy? he will exercise it ungrudgingly. Does he govern? he will govern with diligence. Is he engaged in business? he will put new life and new energy into his business. Does he pray? he will pray with a new fervency. This new spirit will show itself in all his life. It will prevent all social hypocrisies; his love will be without false pretense. He will be patient, generous, hospitable, sympathetic, lowly minded. In nothing will this new life show itself more evidently than in the changed attitude of the soul toward personal enemies. It will be the attitude of him who, persecuted, beaten, spit upon, desired no revenge; desired only that his assailants might be forgiven. He cannot always live peaceably with all men; but he will always wish to do so, and will do so if it be possible. He will not seek even to vindicate himself from threatened wrong or unjust aspersion. He will leave his vindication to his Lord. Pity for the wrongdoer will always overcome anger because of the wrong done; and the only victory over an enemy which will satisfy him will be the victory of love which converts him into a friend.

“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this age, but be ye

transformed by the making anew of your mind, that ye may prove what is the will of God — namely, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect. For I say through the grace given to me, to every one that is among you, not to be high-minded, above that which he ought to be minded, but to be so-minded as to be sober-minded, as God hath distributed to each one the measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body and all members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ and severally members one of another.

“ But having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or service, let us give ourselves to our serving; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhortation. He that giveth, let him do it with singleness of heart; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, ungrudgingly. Let love be without false pretense. Abhor the evil, cleave to the good. In love of the brethren be kindly-affectioned one with another, in honor preferring one another; in diligence, not slothful; in spirit, fervent, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer; sharing in common with the saints in their necessities; pursuing hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but be led away by the things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits. Give back to no one evil in return for evil. Take heed beforehand that your conduct be honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as

much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, do not seek to vindicate yourselves, but yield to the wrath of your enemies. For it is written : ' Vindication is mine ; I will requite, saith the Lord.' ¹ Wherefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink ; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good." ²

2. In the thirteenth chapter Paul takes up the more specific question of the relation of the child of God to the state of which he is a member. How is he to regard the authority of government ? And in considering Paul's answer to this question we are to remember that the government of Rome at this time was as I have described it in a previous chapter, — despotic, cruel, corrupt. In what way will one who possesses the life of God in his soul regard such a government, if he is a subject of it ? This is Paul's answer : —

" Let every soul subject himself to the higher powers. There is no power but from God ; those that exist are ordained by God. So that he who arrays himself against the power arrays himself against the ordinance of God." ³

Are we to understand that Paul declares that all law is divine and all disobedience sinful ?

¹ Deut. xxxii. 35.

² Rom. xii.

³ Rom. xiii. 1, 2. There is a play on the words in the original, which might be thus interpreted to the English reader ; the powers that exist have been placed by God ; so that whosoever displaceth the power arrays himself against the placing of God.

Would Paul maintain that Daniel was wrong when he refused to bow the knee to the idol reared in the Chaldean plain? That the apostles were wrong when to the command that they cease from preaching the gospel they refused obedience, replying, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard? That William H. Seward was wrong when he contended that there was a "higher law" than any congressional enactment? No! Paul does not say that we are always to obey all governmental powers; he says we are to be subject to them. Daniel was subject to the powers when he allowed himself to be cast into the lions' den. The apostles were subject to the powers when they were brought before the court and answered the accusation. Jesus Christ was subject to the powers when he stood before the courts of Caiaphas and of Pilate unresisting. Subjection to government does not always involve obedience to its laws; one is equally subject if he disobeys and patiently endures the penalty.

Nor does Paul's teaching, properly understood, condemn all revolutions. It cannot be affirmed that he would stigmatize as wrong the overthrow of Bourbon despotism in Europe; or the Puritan revolution against the Stuarts in England; or the American revolution. To change one government is not to array oneself against all government; to revolutionize a particular government is not to

destroy all government. Paul affirms that government is a divine institution. So is the family ; so is the church. He who sets himself in array against them sets himself in array against the divine order. But he who in Paul's time insisted that marriage ought not to be treated like a commercial partnership, that it should be restored to the primitive form, in which love bound husband and wife together for life, would not thereby have set himself against the divine order. Luther did not set himself against the divine order when he endeavored to array Germany against the form which the Church had assumed in his time, and bring it back to something like its primitive simplicity. Neither did Wesley, when he sought to recast the Church and revivify it with a missionary spirit which it had lost. So Cromwell and Washington, Hampden and Hamilton did not set themselves against the divine order when they attempted to overthrow a corrupt government, which had ceased to fulfill the ends for which government is organized, and substitute a new and better government in its place. They did not seek to abolish government ; they sought to improve it.

There are three conceptions of the foundation of government. The first bases it upon force. It regards law as the will of a superior addressed to an inferior ; and what makes him the superior is the fact that he has power to enforce his will by penalties attached to disobedience. The second bases it upon the consent of the governed.

According to this conception government is simply a compact, by which men have agreed to relinquish some of their natural liberties for the real or supposed advantages derived from social order and organization. This doctrine, of which Rousseau was the preëminent expounder, was very popular in the latter part of the last century and in the beginning of this, and was apparently the doctrine entertained by a part, though certainly not by all, the founders of our United States Constitution. The third is the doctrine which Paul here affirms. Political organization is a part of the divine order. As it is a part of the divine decree that men should be not solitary but set in families, so that in the divine order every man is born into a family, so it is a part of the divine decree that men should be organized in political communities, so that men are born into the nation. Government is not a necessary evil; the less of it the better. It is not an order rendered necessary only or chiefly by the vices and sins of men. Its end is not merely nor mainly the restraint of men who will not restrain themselves. It is the ordered life of humanity. It may be corrupted; it may be diverted from the ends for which it is divinely ordained. But still it is better than none. The worst government is better than anarchy. Disobedience to law may become a duty, enforced by reverence for a higher law. Revolution may become necessary in order to secure a government more in harmony with the divine order. But neither fact militates against

the truth that government is part of the divine order, or modifies the general principle that revolution is right only when in it there is a hope not merely of overturning a bad government but of substituting a better in its place. Paul's doctrine that government is a divine order, and that the foundation of its authority is neither force in the human superior, nor the consent of the governed, but the will and authority of God himself, to which the governor must conform, whether he be king, oligarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, is not inconsistent with a revolution like that of 1776 which aims at maintaining government, renovated and reformed; but it is inconsistent with all such pseudo-revolutions as those of the Nihilists of Russia and the Revolutionaries in Armenia, which prepare no well considered plans of practical political reform. No revolution is justifiable unless it is constructive. And it hardly needs to be said that when Paul wrote his Letter to the Romans a revolution in Rome would have been more hopeless of achieving any beneficent results than to-day a peasant revolution in Russia or an Armenian revolution in Turkey.

3. In the fourteenth and part of the fifteenth chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans he takes up a general question which he discusses at somewhat greater length in his first Letter to the Corinthians. I need speak of his treatment of this question here, therefore, only very briefly.

There are certain practical questions about right

and wrong, upon which men are generally in substantial agreement; there are others concerning which judgment depends very much on education. These doubtful questions vary from time to time. In Paul's time the doubtful questions concerned the eating of meat offered to idols and the observance of certain feasts which belonged to the Jewish ritual. They have long since disappeared; but other doubtful questions have taken their place. Is it right to play cards? to dance? to go to the theatre? These and kindred questions are the ones on which now Christians are disagreed, as then they were disagreed on the questions, Is it right to eat meat offered to idols? and to ignore the seventh day of the week? In his letter to the Romans Paul lays down three principles by which the individual can guide himself in answering these doubtful questions.

The first principle is that the moral quality of an act depends not on the act, but on the spirit of the agent doing the act. It is of the very essence of Paul's teaching that there is nothing evil in meat that has been offered to an idol, and nothing sacred in one day above another. But if one thinks it is wrong to eat meat that has been offered to idols, to him it is wrong; if he thinks it his duty to observe the seventh day of the week because the Fourth Commandment prescribes that day, for him it is duty. To disobey one's conscience is always wrong. It is contrary to the very essence of Paul's teaching to suppose that we can draw lines and

imagine that everything on one side of the line is right and everything on the other is wrong. There are no such lines. Life is all to be given to God ; whatever helps the divine life is right ; whatever hinders it is wrong. But if a man does in fact, however mistakenly, draw such a line, then for him to transgress it is wrong, because to transgress it is to hinder his own divine life, violate his conscience, and so obscure his moral judgment and weaken his moral will. It is difficult to say why it is wrong to play a game with colored figures on bits of pasteboard and right to play a similar game with historical names printed on them ; why it is right to knock balls about on green turf, — that is, play croquet, — and wrong to knock balls around on a green table, — that is, play billiards ; why it is right to witness charades in a parlor and wrong to witness legitimate drama in a theatre. But if education, or prejudice, with or without reason, has led one to draw these lines, he is not to disregard them because others do not draw them. “*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” Everything in conduct is to be the natural spontaneous outgoing of the new life of God in the soul. This new life will not at once, perhaps will not ever, sweep away old prejudices. If a Hindu Christian feels that it is wrong to destroy life for food, for him it is wrong. Whatever one does contrary to his own conception of righteousness is wrong. The morality of the act depends on the spirit of the one who does the act.

The second principle has been well expressed in the phrase "Thy conscience for thyself and not for another." The conscience of each man is a lawgiver to him, but it is not a lawgiver to his neighbor. Therefore neither may he that eateth despise him that eateth not, nor he that eateth not condemn him that eateth. The Liberal is not to look with contempt on the Puritan, nor the Puritan with condemnation on the Liberal. He who allows himself largeness of liberty as a child of God is not to despise his stricter neighbor for his narrowness, nor he who lives under law and within fixed lines to condemn his freer neighbor because of his laxity.

Finally, while every man is to govern himself by his own conscience no man is to live in disregard of the conscience of his neighbor. The fundamental principle is, that is right which promotes the life of God in the soul of man; that is wrong which hinders this divine life. Though it does not hinder that life in the one who acts, it may be wrong if it hinders the life in another who is looking on. "Nothing is unclean of itself; but to him that accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. If because of thy meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love." Love is not only "the greatest thing in the world," it is the only thing. God is love; to walk not in love is to separate oneself from God. I am not to impose my conscience on another; but I am to accept my neighbor's conscience as a restraint on myself. For "we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and

not to please ourselves." Our *pleasure* is not to overbalance another man's *life*; but neither is his pleasure to overbalance our life. We may regard his conscience; but we may not make it our law-giver. If I may never do anything to which the conscience of some neighbor objects, I can never do anything. The Roman Catholic could not go to a Protestant church because the Roman Catholic thinks it is wrong; and he could not go to a Roman Catholic church because the Protestant thinks it is wrong. The Protestant could not go to a Roman Catholic church because the Protestant thinks it is wrong, and he could not go to a Protestant church because the Roman Catholic thinks it is wrong. He could not go to church if another man's conscience and not our own is to be our law-giver. The whole principle of life is summed up in the one counsel: "Let us follow after the things which make for peace and the things whereby we may build one another up," i. e. in the divine life. All comes back to this at last: How shall we best promote the divine life in ourselves and others? The divine life is the source of all truly righteous conduct; the divine life is the standard by which all conduct is to be tested.

Paul's letter to the Romans, then, to sum up these four chapters in one brief paragraph, I understand to be this: Neither society nor the individual can be made righteous by attempting conformity to a law external to one's self, whether it is human or divine. Man cannot be made righteousness by

any external process. He is not repoussé work. There is only one way of living aright; it is by freely receiving the gift of life freely given to the soul by God. When one has received this free gift of God into the heart, a new life springs up in him spontaneously. He is as one married, who gets a new life of love in his marriage. He is as one emancipated; set free from the old bondage and the old relation of servitude. He is as a dead man who has been called from the grave by the overmastering voice of the Christ. To such an one even tribulation seems joyful, for tribulation is working out character, and character is all he cares for. To whom does God offer this free gift? To all the world. There is, it is true, a destiny or fate which overrules us. But it is not as the Romans think it, a blind necessity; nor as the Greeks think it, a fate whose only office it is to punish the wicked by avenging sin; nor as the Jews think it, an autocratic and irresponsible partialism. The end of this destiny, the object of this fate, the purpose of this Providence is infinite and eternal mercy; and when it has accomplished its result, the law that has seemingly shut men up unto disobedience will be seen to be God's preparation for giving them newness of life. That newness of life will mean for us here and now giving ourselves wholly and unreservedly in the spirit of joyous love to the service of our fellow-men because to the service of our God; loyalty to the church, to the state, and to the family because

they are a part of God's ordinance ; the settlement of all doubtful questions by the voice of God within us ; and respect for the voice of God as it speaks to others, or seems to others to speak to them ; in brief, it will mean the life of faith, which is the life of joyous freedom, — the glory of the liberty of the sons of God.

CHAPTER XV

THE LETTERS TO THE EPHESIANS AND THE COLOSSIANS

AT the time of Christ's birth, intellectual supremacy had passed, in a measure, from Greece to Egypt, and was centred in Alexandria, which for some centuries remained the intellectual capital of the world. This city was situated at the confluence of three streams of intellectual and spiritual life, — the Oriental, the Jewish, and the Greek. Rome at this time hardly influenced Alexandria at all, and from Alexandria as yet influences had not passed out by migration into Rome. The Oriental dreams; the Greek defines; the Hebrew acts. These three sentences may serve as a characterization of the distinction between the influences that met and strangely intermingled in Alexandria. For they did intermingle, and out of their confluence there grew up a scheme of combined dreaming, thinking, and practical ethics, which constitutes what is known in history as the Alexandrian School. Those who have made a study of the subject will have to exercise some indulgence towards me in the endeavor here made to define in a very brief compass the teaching of this school. It is

very difficult to translate Oriental dreaming into Occidental thought ; and to translate a composite school, which was inconsistent with itself and incongruous and self-contradictory in its results, into forms of thought which the lay American can understand, without having studied these schools of philosophy, is not an easy task.

The Oriental then regarded and now regards God as the Absolute and the Unconditioned. There can be nothing outside of him ; for if there is anything outside of him, then he is limited. Therefore God is the all, and the all is God. This Unconditioned and this Absolute could not create, because what he had made would be apart from himself, and he would be limited by the very result of his creation. But Hebraism had centred its faith in a personal God, — a God who was a king over Israel, a God who created the world and ruled it. The very essence of Hebraism was that God had created and was apart from his world, not identical with it. Thus there was apparently an irreconcilable contradiction between the Oriental and the Hebraic conception of God. This contradiction the Alexandrian School endeavored to solve, these conceptions it endeavored to unite by its hypothesis of emanations : that there had proceeded from this Unconditioned, this Absolute, certain secondary causes or deities, who were called by various names, such as chiefs, rulers, powers, principalities, eons. These secondary causes or deities — it is difficult to know which appellation

to give them — were the creators of the world. The Infinite, the Eternal, the Absolute, had not created anything ; but from him had proceeded these secondary beings, and these secondary beings had created, and thus an imperfect world was made by imperfect gods who had proceeded from a perfect God. Thus the Hebrew found a God whom he could believe in as a Person, and the Oriental a God whom he could recognize as the Absolute and the Unconditioned.

But this Infinite, this Unconditioned, was also the Unknown and the Unknowable. The idea that God is the Unknown and the Unknowable does not date from the time of Herbert Spencer, nor even from the time of the Alexandrian school ; it is to be found far back in Oriental philosophy. But the very essence of Hebraism was that man should know God ; must become acquainted with him ; must obey him ; must recognize and revere him. And here again were two antagonistic conceptions : a God who could not be known and a God who must be known, or whom man must ever strive to know. So these secondary deities served another purpose. The Infinite, the Unconditioned, the Absolute, could not be known, but the chiefs, the rulers, the principalities, the powers, the eons, could be known. Thus there was room, on the one hand, for the Hebraic acquaintance, on the other hand, for the Oriental non-acquaintance.

There is evil in this world — natural evil, that is, suffering, and moral evil, that is, sin. But if God

is perfect, he cannot produce either natural evil or moral evil. And yet God is the all. How, if God is the all and is in the all, can there be natural evil and moral evil? how is it possible to reconcile these two conceptions, the one of God, the other of life? The Alexandrian school did so, somewhat after this fashion: The Absolute, the Unconditioned, is the fullness that filleth all things with himself; there is, therefore, a perfect spiritual life, and in this perfect spiritual life there is no pain, no suffering, no disease, no sin, neither natural evil nor moral evil. But there is matter. Some said it was eternal. Some said it was not real, but only a shadow which existed in the imagination of men. But whether it was a shadow or eternal, it was, or it seemed to be. And the evil was all in the shadow, the matter; not in the reality, the spiritual life. There really was no evil.

Out of this there sprung two schools of thought again which were singularly contradictory. Between them, so far as I know, no reconciliation was attempted. Both schools started with the affirmation that matter is undivine. One school said, Since matter is undivine, since in matter resides evil, therefore we must get rid of it. The issue was asceticism. The other school said, Since matter is undivine, it has no real existence; we may utterly disregard it. Licentiousness of the body is not a reality, it is only a pretense. Drunkenness is not a reality, it is only a shadow. There is no harm in the shadow. Therefore be drunken if

you like and be licentious if you like. There is no disease, and there is no sin. Believe that you are well and you will be well; believe that you are virtuous and you will be virtuous. Sin and disease were regarded only as what a modern school of philosophy calls "mortal thoughts." Modern Christian Science is an inheritance from the Alexandrian school.

This Alexandrian school of philosophy, with its dreaming about God and its definition of God, and its dreaming about sin and its definition of sin, passed over into Greece, and was found at Ephesus. And when the Ephesian church became a Christian church, this Oriental philosophy mixed with the Christian doctrine, and out of this intermixing of Oriental dreaming, Greek definition, Hebrew activity, and Christian doctrine there grew up what are known as the Gnostic sects of the early Church. So far as history gives us any account of them, they did not grow into definite organization until after Paul, but there are abundant evidences of their germ in the epistle to the Ephesians and in that to the Colossians. It would, indeed, seem as though Christian philosophy and this Oriental philosophy were absolutely antagonistic one to the other. This Orientalism was pantheistic. The essence of the Christian religion is the personality of God. This Orientalism was in thought, if not in name, polytheistic. The essence of Christianity, as of Hebraism, is monotheism. This Orientalism regarded law as only a form of nature; Christianity

regards it as the expression of a wise and righteous will. This Orientalism regarded sin as only a semblance or appearance, or, at best, only an immaturity in the development of the race. Christianity regards sin as a willful setting of man's will against God's will. Orientalism said that by and by all life would come back into God by a natural process, as the clouds come back to the ocean. Christianity held that no man could come back to God without deliberate repentance and deliberate faith. Orientalism held to the absorption at last in the Infinite and the Eternal. Christianity held to an immortal personality. Still, Orientalism entered the Christian Church, and was a greater peril to it than either paganism or Judaism. Paganism fought Christianity; an open foe is not much to be dreaded. Judaism would have imprisoned Christianity; it was not impossible to open the door and let Christianity out from its cage. But this Orientalism entered the Christian Church itself, corrupted it at its very fountain, claimed to be the supreme Christian sect, and looked down with disdain upon other and simpler-minded Christians as far below them,¹—not altogether unlike something we have seen in our own time.

Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians and that to the Colossians with this mental state of the Christians in the province of Asia in mind. The phrases which he uses in these epistles, which to

¹ This peril is admirably described by Sabatier: *The Apostle Paul*, pp. 221, 222.

many of us are unmeaning, were full of significance to those Asiatic Christians. "Principalities," "powers," "rulers," "fullness," these and kindred words were familiar words in the Alexandrian philosophy, to describe these secondary gods, these emanations, these manifestations, these representations of the Infinite and the Absolute. Paul does not directly attack Orientalism. He sets before his readers Christianity as containing all that which is necessary to satisfy both the intellectual wants and the spiritual wants recognized by the Alexandrian schools, because it can satisfy the intellectual wants and the spiritual wants of all humanity. He recognizes in these men a seeking after truth, and he uses their own phrases to show them that Christianity fulfills all that they seek. The epistle to the Ephesians was probably written as a circular letter, and sent, not to the church at Ephesus alone, but to a number of churches, and the copy which has come down to us since is known as the epistle to the Ephesians because it chanced to be the copy sent to that one church.¹ The epistle to the Colossians was probably sent to the church at Colossæ alone; still, it follows substantially the same line of argument, and expounds substantially the same philosophy, and sets forth substantially the same truths, as the epistle to the Ephesians. It may

¹ See McGiffert, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 275, 379 ff. Comp. Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of Paul*, ii. 405 ff. Alford's reply in the Prolegomena to his Commentary on Ephesians appears to me inconclusive.

almost be said to be another copy of the circular letter, although not written by a copyist, but freshly rewritten by the apostle. It is not certain which was written first, and it is not material to determine which was written first. I treat Colossians first because that sets forth more fully Paul's conception of Christ, which constitutes the foundation of his entire treatment of this Alexandrian school of religious philosophy.

Christ, he says, is himself the one in whom all fullness dwells, and in whom all principalities and powers are centred. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of the whole creation. In him — that is, by means of him, as the only intermediary cause ¹ — were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. He does not deny that there are invisible agencies ; he does not affirm that they exist ; but he says, if there are any, they are all created by and through Christ.

“All things are created through him and for him, and he is before all, and in him all things have their unity. And he is the head of the body — the Church ; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all he might have the preëminence ; for it pleased the fullness of all to dwell in him.” ²

¹ *ἐν* : the instrument or means by or with which anything is accomplished. — Thayer's *N. T. Gr. Lex.*

² Col. i. 16–19. Literally : It pleased the whole fullness to dwell in him.

I do not know where in Paul's epistles you will find a better statement of his conception of Christ: the first-born of all creation; the intermediary instrument through whom the Infinite and Absolute has become the creator; the image of the Unknown and the Invisible, and so the revelator of the Unknown and the Invisible; creator of all, centre of all, authority over all. And this Christ who is thus above all principalities and powers, this Christ in whom the fullness of divinity dwells, the fullness which, according to the Oriental school, dwells in all nature and makes all nature God, this one has himself brought together pagan and Jew and become the head of the Church and the fullness of the Church. And because he dwells in us, and because he dwells in all things, we are not to be afraid of anything; we are not to become ascetics; we are not to set off certain arbitrarily selected things as inherently and essentially evil.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or sabbath days: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.”¹

Shadows! yes, there are shadows; they are these ascetic rules which the Alexandrian school has borrowed from Oriental philosophy, mingled with Hebrew legislation, and endeavored to impose on the free children of God. Substance! yes, there is a divine substance, a reality — not an Absolute

¹ Col. ii. 16, 17.

and Unconditioned; but the Christ, who reveals the Infinite to men.

“If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world,¹ why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?”²

Are we, then, to adopt the other hypothesis of Orientalism and conclude that we may use all things as we will? No! for if we have this spiritual life we shall be lifted above sin, if not above temptation.

“If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. Put to death, therefore, your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things’ sake cometh the wrath of God; in which ye also walked aforetime, when ye lived in these things.”³

These Orientalists hold that all human relationships are but shadows. It is said of Ramkrishna,

¹ That is, the primary rules and regulations which belong to world-life.

² Col. ii. 20-22.

³ Col. iii. 1-7.

the modern Messiah of the Vedantic philosophy, that he separated himself from his wife in order that he might live a pure and holy life. But Paul says that we are to carry the new and divine life into these relationships, not to escape from them. Therefore he bids wives obey their husbands ; husbands, be gentle and loving to their wives ; children, obey their parents ; parents, provoke not their children ; servants, be obedient to their masters ; masters, be considerate to their servants, remembering that they also have a master. In short, Paul, starting with this doctrine that Jesus Christ is the only intermediary between the Infinite and humanity, the one mediator between God and man,¹ and is thus mediately the Creator, the Revealer, the Redeemer, declares that life from him is to flow into God's children ; and this life will, on the one hand, make them free from the prohibitions of asceticism, and, on the other hand, will lift them above corruption. This is Paul's letter to the Colossians, briefly stated.

His letter to the Ephesians begins with a similar definition of Christ, but proceeds rather along spiritual than along ethical lines. In it Paul declares, more elaborately, that this Christ has reconciled pagan and Jew. He declares more fully how this life dwelling in man makes a new life to proceed from him, and he defines, more eloquently than anywhere else in Scripture, the essence of the Christian religion.

¹ Comp. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power by means of his Spirit in the inward man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the ability to apprehend with all the holy, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height [of love] ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled even unto all the fullness of God.”¹

This, as we have already seen, is Paul’s conception of religion ; it is not obedience to any external law, whether human or divine, though such obedience proceeds from religion ; it is a new and divine life, a life from within, the life of God in the soul of man, who is to be filled absolutely full, even unto all the fullness of God. And it is that men may thus be filled with God that he has appointed a church, and in it ordained various officers. The whole scope and end of the Church, its sole function, is making divinely filled men, conformably to Christ, who is the ideal Man, that he may be the first-born among many brethren.²

“And he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the holy in the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all come unto the unity of the faith and of the perfect knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect manhood, unto the

¹ Eph. iii. 14–19.

² Rom. viii. 29.

measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ ; in order that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried hither and yon by every breath of teaching, in the mere hap-hazard of men, in all sorts of ways after the method of the wanderer ; but, speaking the truth in love, may in everything grow up into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined and knitted together, by that bond of union which is furnished by all the joints, makes increase of the body unto the building of itself up in love, as the vital energy is effectual in every part.”¹

Yet it is no mystical experience apart from life, which Paul commends to his readers. As he has told the Romans, in the twelfth chapter of his letter to them, what practical results will flow from the life of sonship with God, so in his letter to the Ephesians he condemns that pseudo-piety which disregards morality, and makes the liberty of the children of God an excuse for living like the children of the flesh.

“This I say therefore and testify in the Lord, that ye no more walk as the other nations walk, in useless thoughts, being darkened in the understanding, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts ; who being without feeling, have given themselves over to outrageous conduct, to work out every form of impurity in their inordinate desires. But ye have not so learned Christ, if indeed ye have paid heed to Him and been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus ; that ye put aside that which accords with your former

¹ Eph. iv. 11-16.

manner of life, the old man, that which is corrupt, that which is formed in accord with delusive desires ; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind [i. e. the spiritual faculties of your nature] and invest yourselves with the new man, that which is created in accord with God, in righteousness and in that piety which is of the truth.”¹

In our own time Oriental philosophy has again crossed the ocean and come to America, borne on the wings of the wind in literature, or brought by missionaries of an Oriental faith. Their messages are welcome. There is something we have to learn from them. For we must not forget, as we often have forgotten, that Christianity was born midway between the Occident and the Orient ; that it is neither Oriental nor Occidental in its origin ; that it has something of the quality of both. We must not forget, what we sometimes have been inclined to forget, that we are Occidentals, and perhaps have seen Christianity only in part. We must remember that all our creeds and confessions represent, not Christianity, but certain Occidental phases of Christianity : the Apostles' Creed, primitive Christianity ; the Creed of Pius Ninth, Roman Christianity ; the Westminster Confession of Faith, Calvinistic Christianity ; the Thirty-nine Articles, Anglican Christianity ; and even the writings and sermons of Maurice and Brooks and Erskine and Bushnell and Beecher, modern Anglo-Saxon Christianity. Mozoomdar has taught us by his “ Oriental Christ ” that there is a concep-

¹ Eph. iv. 17-24.

tion of Christianity possible to the Oriental which we, who are inclined to think that nothing is true which cannot be mathematically defined, have not yet been able to comprehend. And if these messengers from the Far East, setting their Oriental philosophy before us, shall compel us to reëxamine our Christianity, and the character and the life of Christ, not in the light of any of our creeds, ancient or modern, but in the light of the larger knowledge of the nineteenth century, they will render us a service.

But, on the other hand, if we meet this philosophy in the spirit of Paul, we shall not meet it as those who say, We can take something from Orientalism, something from Christianity, and amalgamate them, and out of them get a universal religion. Christianity is absolutely exclusive, because it is absolutely inclusive. There is but one God — not a Jehovah and a Jupiter and an Odin and a Thor: one God. And there is but one Lord Jesus Christ — not a Confucius and a Socrates and a Siddartha and a Mohammed and a Joe Smith and a Jesus Christ: one Lord Jesus Christ. And to accept Christianity is to accept him as the one and only Messiah of the world. That is what the apostle means when he says there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. Jesus Christ is the world's Saviour; not a Saviour of the Hebrew race or of a Christian people, while other people are to be saved by their own religions

in other ways. And this Christianity is an exclusive religion because it is an inclusive religion. Maurice has said that Christianity has in it all that is best and true in other religions. We may use other spiritual thinkers to interpret this our religion; but we may not amalgamate this with other religions, or think we have yet to search the world for a universal religion because we think that the one we now have is provincial.

Religion as a philosophy has four questions to answer: What is God? What is man? What is the relation between God and man? What is the life which man is to live when he understands and enters into that relation? There is no other question than these four. Christianity has given its answer to each one of these four questions. What is God? God is one; the true, righteous, loving, helpful Father of the whole human race. And God is love. And love, God's love, perfect love, is interpreted by the life Jesus Christ lived on the earth. What is man? Man is in the image of God. If he is not, if he fails in that, he fails of being truly a man. Not until he has come to be in the image of God will he be a man. Is this a statue? I can see a nose and a mouth emerging from the half-hewn marble. No, it is not a statue; it is a half-done statue. Wait until the sculptor is through with his work, then shall we see the statue. Not till God is through with his work shall we see a man; and the world has seen only one true man, the man Christ Jesus. What is the relation be-

tween this God and this man? It is that of the most intimate fellowship of which the human soul can conceive ; one life dwelling in the other life, and filling the other life full of his own fullness. No closer relationship between God and the human soul than that can be conceived. When this fullness has been realized, when we have the fullness of God in us, when God has finished the man, what will be the result in life? Just such a life as Christ lived, with all the splendor of self-sacrifice, all the glory of service, all the heroism, all the enduring patience. What has Orientalism to add to this response which Christianity makes to the problems of life? It offers reincarnation on earth for a new and nobler life in a spiritual sphere. It offers a dream of the Infinite for a living companionship with a living God. Sin and repentance it knows not ; nor redemption, for it cannot know redemption save as it knows sin and repentance. And for the eternal life which the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ offers, and for the rest which comes from fullness of life, it offers Nirvana — the rest of the grave and of an endless sleep.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

PAUL had been mobbed in Jerusalem, and arrested because he was mobbed, and then brought before the judge, and, finding little hope of justice, had taken an appeal, as a Roman citizen had a right to do, to Cæsar. He had been put on board a government vessel for Rome. He had taken a long and dangerous passage — dangerous in the winter season, and proving itself especially dangerous in his case. He had come up to Rome a prisoner in bonds. He had appealed to Cæsar, and more depended on the appeal than his own personal liberty ; for he stood for religious freedom. Up to this time religious freedom had been recognized in imperial Rome. The various religions of the various provinces had been suffered to live, and to proclaim their tenets ; there had been no governmental persecution of any of them ; and Paul stood for this right to preach the religion which he himself professed. But the case dragged, as cases will even in our time. For two years he remained in Rome a prisoner, though with liberties. Part of the time he appears to have been chained to a soldier to prevent his escape ; part of

the time he went, as it were, on parole and lived in his own hired house, and men came to him and he instructed them in the principles of the gospel of Christ.

It was at this time that he wrote the epistle to the Philippians. It is of all the epistles the least a treatise, except that very short letter, which is hardly more than a note, called the Letter to Philemon. It contains no distinct theological doctrine, though it is theological as everything which Paul wrote was theological — that is, pervaded with a deep religious spirit formulated in theological statements. The Philippians had sent him what I may call a missionary box as a token of their affection, and as a provision for his supposed needs. His letter is a letter of personal thanks to them for this remembrance of him.

In it, more than in any other of his epistles, we see the heart of Paul — his inmost life. Says Lightfoot, "It is the noblest reflection of Paul's personal character and spiritual illumination, his large sympathies, his womanly tenderness, his delicate courtesy." To the same effect is Sabatier: "These pages were written from a single inspiration. We may add that they do not so much exhibit the apostle's theological creed as the feelings of his heart and the maturity of his religious life. There is here a wealth of Christian experience, a fullness of faith, a strength and delicacy of affection, which remind us of the finest chapters in the second letter to the Corinthians. There is

the same overflowing inner life ; only prolonged meditations have deepened, calmed, and matured it." Equally explicit, and not less eloquent, is the witness of our own great American scholar, Dr. McGiffert, of Union Theological Seminary : "The whole epistle, in fact, with its warm expression of affection, with its hearty recognition of the devotion of the Philippians, and with its unaffected gratitude for their liberality, combined with its kindly and yet frank and earnest admonitions, furnishes one of the most charming illustrations we have of the apostle's personal character, and of the closeness of the ties which bound him and his coevals together."

It is not easy to phrase such a letter in words other than those in which the writer himself has phrased it. It is not possible to reformulate it, as one can reformulate theology, in different and modern language. We must try to see what his life has been, what his present circumstances are, and then turn to the epistle itself and read in his own words some of these utterances which express his heart's inner life.

It is twenty-eight or thirty years since Paul's conversion. They have been years full of hardship and disappointment. When he was first converted, with the enthusiasm of a young convert he thought that he had but to expound his faith, and the Pharisees, of whom he was one, would accept it. He argued with the Lord that Jerusalem was the place for his ministry, because the Pharisees knew him,

understood his prejudices, and would listen to his message.¹ Hard as his experience and bitter as his disappointment were, he never seems to have gotten over this sanguine faith in man. Whenever he went into a new city he always went into the synagogue first, always preached to the Jews first, always seems to have expected that they would hear him, and to have suffered a new disappointment when they refused. One cannot but admire this hopefulness, that nothing can discourage, nothing can overthrow.

Twenty-eight or thirty years have passed by, and Israel, whom he so loves that he says, "I could almost be willing to be accursed from Christ myself if I could only bring them to know him and to love him," still rejects the Christ and will none of him. But it is not alone in the old church which he has left that he is disappointed; in the new which he has entered he is also disappointed. From the very first he was looked upon with suspicion. The disciples knew him only as one who had persecuted them, and feared that he was pretending conversion that he might get into their conventicles and the better carry on his persecution. He knew none of them, he says, by face, except one or two.² Even the leaders looked at him askance. If subsequently he withstood Peter to his face, doubtless Peter withstood him to his face also. James was doubtful about his course, and counseled him to take a different one, — counsel to which in one unwise

¹ Acts xxii. 17-21.

² Gal. i. 18, 19.

moment he yielded, bringing disaster into his life.¹ This faction in the Christian Church which looked on him with suspicion never ceased while Paul lived, nor for many years after. Wherever he went he was followed by Judaizing Christians, who could not understand his gospel and who vigorously antagonized it. It is not easy to stand in a Christian pulpit and preach a Christian gospel and believe that you are interpreting the Christ, and have brethren of your own in the church think that you are undermining faith and destroying it, and misunderstand and misreport and misrepresent you. This was Paul's experience at a time when the opportunities for correcting misapprehension were far less than in our own time.

Disappointed in the Christian Church, he was again and again disappointed in his expectation from the Gentiles. He looked out upon its darkness and its misery, and he felt sure that he had a faith which, if he could put it into the hearts of the children of men, would revolutionize the world, dissipate the darkness, take away the misery, emancipate mankind, bring in the kingdom of God. But in this also he was disappointed. Athens laughed at him. Corinth listened, for the most part, contemptuously, and went back to its worldliness. Philippi persecuted him. Ephesus mobbed his companions, and would have mobbed him could the mob have reached him. His auditors among the pagans were gathered from the poorer and lower

¹ Acts xxi. 18-30.

classes. You see, he said, not many rich, not many wise, not many noble, are called.¹ He was, as Coleridge has said, one of the finest gentlemen of whom history gives any record ; not without some means ; a man of culture ; of fine education ; who had added to education that culture which travel brings ; and yet his constituency were the poor, the outcast, the ignorant, the despised, the freedman, and the slave. There were few among the people whom he knew from whom he could draw life.

Moreover, his own churches, those which had grown up under his ministry, turned against him. Again and again the planting of his own hands he saw perverted or corrupted. He had been received by the Galatians with enthusiasm ; and he had seen them dropping away from him, suspecting his motives and abandoning his ministry, and going back into Judaism. He had been welcomed by enthusiastic disciples in Corinth ; and he had seen them dividing into sects, and himself traduced by emissaries who undermined his authority and questioned his motives. He had been so aroused with indignation that once he started to go back to Corinth, by his own personal presence to do battle with those who had misrepresented and misreported, and then stopped because he did not quite dare to trust his temper under the circumstances. He had seen corruption enter into the churches of Ephesus and Colossæ ; he had seen them turned away from the simplicity which was in the Lord Jesus Christ

¹ 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

by the Orientalism which had been imported from Alexandria, and under its influence a mongrel religion grow up — polytheistic and pantheistic, lacking the simplicity of the Hebrew faith. And these were the churches he had himself established. Sometimes the question must have come upon him whether anything he had done would stand after he had left. "The care of the churches which comes upon me daily," he puts as the climax of all the burdens which he bore.

And yet there was a still heavier burden. Disappointed in his own people, disappointed in the Christian Church, disappointed in the instability of the pagans, disappointed in the recreancy and the apostasy of the churches which he had himself established, he was disappointed in his own spiritual hopes. He had fully believed that Jesus Christ would come in a very little while. He had looked for his return from month to month, from day to day. He had entered on his mission with a strong faith that the Lord was about to establish by power the kingdom of God on the earth, and he had thought that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the attestation and evidence that he would so come and would overthrow imperial Romanism and establish the kingdom of God in its place. But the days had lengthened into months and the months into years, and the years into more than twoscore years, and still there was no sign of his coming. Hope deferred might well have made the heart sick. He no longer looked for the coming of the Lord

and the establishment of the kingdom in his own time.

Then hope had taken a new form: the hope that Rome, imperial Rome, would itself become a Christian power. Four centuries later it did; but four centuries is a long while to wait. Paul had hoped to live to see the day. And now he was beginning to question whether he should even be permitted to give the message of this Christ in the Roman Empire. The clouds of approaching persecution were gathering upon the horizon, the mutterings of the coming storm could be distinctly heard, while he stands in Rome for that liberty which up to that time never had been denied. And he was alone; a prisoner; part of the time chained to a soldier companion; forsaken by others; his own companions scattered; alone; uncertain as to the issue of the trial; wondering whether it would end in death, not only to him, but to the liberty of the gospel; or in his emancipation and in a larger liberty and a larger opportunity. What is more likely to take the life out of man than this perplexity and uncertainty?

But more than all this, suppose he won a victory, what then? Already his prophetic vision forecast the future. He saw — he could not have failed to see, and this epistle to the Philippians gives us hints that he saw — that the Judaistic faction which had followed him all his life was about to triumph over him in the church which he had founded. That faction would enthrone itself in Rome. If

imperial Rome became Christian Rome, Christian Rome would also become imperial Rome; the Christianity which would centre itself there would not be a gospel of liberty; it would be a law proceeding from a human head and enforced by human pains and penalties. The shadow of this fear crossed his path and added to his sadness.

Disappointed in his own people; suspected in the Christian Church; more than once deserted by the churches which he had founded; disappointed in his own earlier faith of Christ's speedy coming; beginning to question whether he would not be disappointed in his second expectation of the conversion of the Roman Empire; alone; imprisoned; forbidden the liberty of action in which such a soul as his finds relief; and already beginning to foreshadow defeat in that which was vital to him — the liberty wherewith Christ makes free — he writes this letter to the Philippians. It records Paul's religion under trial. It would not have been strange if such a man in such circumstances should have written a letter like the Forty-second and Forty-third Psalms. It would not be strange if in this letter were found hope struggling with despair in the alternate cry, "O God, my soul is cast down within me!" and the answer, "I shall yet trust in him who is my God." What do we find? Joy — thanks: and this is the *motif* of this symphony, which runs through it all: —

"I thank my God upon my every remembrance of

you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; in order that ye may stand the test of the light, nor cause others to stumble, even unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”¹

Joy sings through this letter from beginning to end. This is the song of the apostle whom one might well expect to have been discouraged, and ready, if not to abandon hope, to cling to it with despair. He has told the Corinthians that the last enemy to be destroyed is death; the last enemy has been destroyed for him. He fears him no longer.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh, — *if* this is the fruit of my work, then what I shall choose I know not. But I am in a

¹ Phil. i. 3-11.

strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ ; for it is very far better : yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.”¹

I have stood by the bedside of men who wished to die, and who, coming back to life again, saw recovery as a defeat ; and I have stood by the bedside of men who wished not to die, and to whom the going was like a crucifixion. But here is a man who, when death knocks at his door, says, Come in and I will rejoice ; stay out and I will rejoice ; for to live and continue in my work is good, but to depart and be with Christ is still better.

He tells the Philippians what is Christian life and Christian character in a passage which is often quoted for its doctrinal bearing on the person of Christ, but which, as Paul used it, is chiefly an exposition of what should be the spirit of the Christian : —

“ Be intent within yourselves on this on which Christ Jesus was intent, who, although formerly he bore the form of God, yet did not think that this equality with God was something to be eagerly clung to, but emptied himself of it, so as to assume the form of a servant, in that he became like unto men, and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross.”²

This the mind — not to count even equality with God a prize to be seized upon ; ready to step down from any office or any rank, how high soever it be, in order to serve others ; ready to empty one’s self

¹ Phil. i. 21-24.

² Phil. ii. 5-8.

of scholarship, wisdom, place, honor, emoluments, so that by emptying himself he may fill others. Easy to preach; not so easy to live. But when one has this life, then he can say, as Paul says a little later, "I know both how to be abased and how to abound." That is a difficult knowledge. There are some men who know how to be abased and walk in humility; there are some men who know how to abound and walk in wealth and largeness of life; but to know how to go from the valley to the mountain top and from the mountain top back into the valley again, and go singing all the time, alike in fog and sunshine, alike in darkness and light — who knows this secret, save him who has the mind which was in that One who emptied himself and was made in the form of a servant? and where in human history will you find the man who shows more of this mind of Christ Jesus than this Apostle Paul? And yet he does not count himself to have it, he only counts himself eagerly to desire it: —

"Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss by reason of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: through whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, *even* that which proceeds from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which proceeds from God and is bestowed upon faith: that I may know him, and

the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.”¹

Observe the strange climax! First, the power of Christ’s resurrection; next, the fellowship in his suffering; last of all, conformity to his death — this the highest, this the most desired.

“Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold on him: but one thing, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.”²

As Matthew sat at the receipt of customs, and Christ came and touched him on the shoulder and said, “Follow me,” and he left his table and followed, so Paul conceives himself as sitting in the market-place, and Christ coming and touching him and saying, “Follow me,” and himself rising up to follow him. Yet he always follows a fleeing Christ; always drawing nearer, yet always seeing Christ still on beyond; always hearing the voice crying to him, “Onward! forward!” rejoicing even in the dangers and the failures and the disappointments, because out of them grows a larger, a richer, a diviner life.

Do we not wish that Paul had told us how we

¹ Phil. iii. 7-11.

² Phil. iii. 12-14.

might enlarge this life of ours; how in our poverty, in our imperfect Christian experience, we might grow into the larger, richer life? These words "Have faith in Christ," have almost lost their meaning; they are too conventional; we do not understand; we want some plain, practical, simple directions how to cultivate in ourselves this life that will rejoice in wrestling, in conflict, in disappointment and in sorrow; that shall follow on and never attain, and yet always rejoice to follow on! Paul gives it to his friends and readers: —

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; whatever is virtuous, and whatever is praiseworthy, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace shall be with you."¹

Look out, he says, upon this world. You may look on its bad side, its cruel side, its shameful side, but there are other things to see. There are pure things and honorable things, there are glorious things and heroic things; there are noble sides to human nature and splendid sides to human life. Look on those things, think on those things, feed on those things, and then, thinking, feeding, looking, seeing, do those things, and the peace of God shall dwell with you.

Paul is acquitted. The right to preach the

¹ Phil. iv. 8, 9.

gospel is triumphant. And he goes his way, and travels as far west as Spain, preaching; and comes back again; and three or four or five years later is rearrested and brought again to Rome. The era of cruel persecution has set in; the charge against Nero of setting fire to Rome Nero has determined to escape by putting it upon the Christians. Paul is brought to trial, and there is no offense found in him, save only this, that he is a Christian. And now he has no hope — or shall I rather say, no fear? — of acquittal; now he sees that presently he shall indeed depart and be with Christ, which is far better; and he sums up the whole story of his life, all his past, and the whole prophecy of his life, all its forelooking in one luminous sentence in his second letter to Timothy: ¹“I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Saviour will give to me, and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.” The whole of Paul’s theology is summed up in that last parting word of his to his friends in Jesus Christ. Life is a battle — fight it bravely; life a course — run it eagerly; life a faith-keeping — hold it firmly; but do not think to win the righteousness by your battle, by your race, or by your faith-keeping: God will give it to you; it is his free gift, if you simply love him and wish to see him.

¹ Whether he wrote the letter or not this sentence is thoroughly Pauline in its spirit.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

IN bringing this volume on the life and epistles of Paul to a close, I purpose, in this chapter, to indicate the relation of his theological teaching, as here interpreted, both to the theology which preceded and to that which has followed it.

Paganism has generally represented God or the gods as wrathful with men because of their sins. It has represented, therefore, the necessity of appeasing that wrath in order to secure the forgiveness of sins. The religious ceremonials of pagan religions, with few if any exceptions, have been, not for the purpose of ascertaining the will of God, or of praising him, or even of confessing sin to him, but chiefly for the purpose of placating his anger and avoiding the evil consequences which would come from that anger. They have generally also assumed a great gulf between man and God, and the necessity of some intermediary to mediate between man and God or the gods; and these intermediaries they have called priests, the object of the priest being to represent man to God, because man was so estranged from God by his sins that he could not himself come into the presence of God or the gods.

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Thus has grown up the system of sacrifices and of priests, with all that which has gathered about them. The essential principles of Mosaism — that is, of the teaching of Moses, as it is to be found in the oldest book of the Bible, the Book of the Covenant¹ — struck at the heart of this whole expiatory conception. Its fundamental declaration was this : God is a righteous God, and he demands righteousness of his children, and he demands nothing else. On the one hand was the affirmation that, no matter what sacrifices are offered and no matter what priests are employed, if man is not righteous he will not appease God's wrath, and will not be satisfactory to him. On the other hand was the declaration that, if man is righteous, if he obey God's law, if he does do what God has told him to do, God will ask nothing else, he will be satisfied. By obedience and only by obedience can man be reconciled to God, and be acceptable to him.²

Thus there were two conceptions presented before the world : First, the conception that God or the gods are angry and must be satisfied by sacrifices offered to them ; second, the conception that God is a righteous God and is satisfied by obedience to his law. These two intermingled in the Jewish nation, and out of them grew the Levitical system. In this system the original and simple teaching of Moses was radically modified. The

¹ Exodus xx.-xxiv. 7.

² See for example Ex. xv. 26 ; Lev. xxvi. 3 ff. ; Deut. xxviii. 1 ff.

Levitical system insisted upon sacrifices, but very much simpler sacrifices than did the pagans. The pagans measured the value of sacrifice by the cost of the thing sacrificed. The Levitical system reversed this; it forbade giving to God an imperfect gift of little value to the giver, but it put no emphasis on the cost of the gift: a man might offer a bullock or a lamb or a pair of doves or a sheaf of wheat. The value depended, not on the thing offered, but on the spirit of the offerer. But still, under the Levitical system, sacrifices were required, and in its later development they were required to be offered in one place (a certain temple in Jerusalem), and they were required to be offered through a certain priesthood appointed for that purpose, and no one else was permitted to approach the Almighty with those sacrifices. The priesthood was necessary; the sacrifices were necessary. Thus the old paganism, modified by Mosaism, was wrought into the Levitical law. Against it the prophets protested again and again. Again and again they declared of Jehovah that he desired not sacrifices, that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; again and again they repeated, in substance, the declaration of Micah, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" Thus there were in Jewish history three systems — the pagan system, the Mosaic system, and the intermingling of the two in the Levitical system.

When Jesus Christ came to the world, he re-

peated the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. So far as we know, he never offered a sacrifice himself, and he never advised others to offer sacrifices. When men confessed to him their sins, he told them their sins were forgiven; never did he send them to the priest to make the offering for sin which, under the Levitical code, as under the pagan system, was regarded essential in order to secure the forgiveness of sin.¹ He thus disregarded, though he did not directly assail, the pagan and the Levitical system. And, further, he undermined it by denying its fundamental postulate. He always represented God as a Father who is ready at once to receive the erring child the moment he returns to his Father with contrition and confession.²

But he went far beyond Mosaism, even as it had been interpreted by the most radical of the prophets. Mosaism had said, You must render yourself acceptable to God by obedience to law. But Christ in the Sermon on the Mount declared that obedience to external law is not enough. A man might not commit adultery and yet might be impure. A man might not be guilty of profanity and yet might lack in simplicity of nature. A man might not kill and yet be wrathful. Nothing, he said, will satisfy the law of God except purity of heart. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," that

¹ The case of the leper told to show himself to the priest is no exception. Luke xvii. 14. See ante, p. 192.

² Luke xv. 20 ff.

is, unless there is something very different from and something far beyond obedience to laws which you suppose God has issued from his judgment throne, your righteousness will not avail. You must have an inward life. Your outward life must flow from this inward life. And then, in the close of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ tells his disciples how this inward life is to be obtained. As a father will give to the child that which it asks, so the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him.¹ "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Life is God's gift. Ask for it, obtain it, then live it. This is the Sermon on the Mount.

The disciples, however, did not understand; and after Christ died they interpreted this message of the gospel through Mosaism, and later theology modified it to make it harmonize with Leviticalism. To Paul above all the apostles we owe the interpretation of this gospel of Christ, as contrasted with paganism, with Leviticalism, and even with Mosaism. According to Paul, God gives his own life freely to all who are willing to receive that life. This gift of life Paul customarily calls grace, a word identical in origin with the word gratis, which we have borrowed from the Latin. It means free gift. Paul, then, declares that God gives life as a free gift. It is not to be purchased. The pagan is wrong in thinking that it must be pur-

¹ Luke xi. 13.

chased by great sacrifices ; the Levitical law is wrong in thinking that it must be purchased by any sacrifice ; and the Pharisees are wrong in thinking that it must be purchased by obedience to law. It is not to be purchased at all. There is no price to be paid for it. It is not bought by a sacrifice, nor by obedience, nor by repentance ; it is not bought at all. God gives life to all who are willing to receive it. And this willingness to receive it, this desire to possess it, this determination to have it, this choice of it with all which that choice involves, this is faith. So Paul says the pagan is wrong, there is no wrath of God to be appeased by sacrifice ; the Jew is wrong, there is no distance from God to be bridged by a priest and an altar and a Jewish ritual ; the Pharisee is wrong, there is no satisfaction of God to be purchased, no reconciliation with him to be bought, by obeying the laws which he has issued. We are simply to take the free gift of God — his life — and then live freely, spontaneously, naturally, because we have received it. “ Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” ¹

Hardly had the Roman Empire been nominally converted to Christianity, before the northern barbarians conquered imperial Rome. Then began a gradual process in which the paganism of the northern barbarians and the Judaistic Christianity of Rome, that is, Paganism, Judaism, Mosaism, and what I will call Paulinism, intermingled to

¹ Rev. xxii. 17.

make historic Christianity. The days of our week borrow their titles from paganism. Monday is Moon's day; Sunday is Sun's day; Tuesday is Tiw's or Zeus's day; Wednesday is Odin's day; Thursday is Thor's day; Friday is Freyja's day; Saturday is Saturn's day: each a day dedicated to a pagan god or goddess. It is not possible that we should have borrowed so much of our life from paganism as to have entitled the very days of our week by the names of pagan deities, and not borrowed something of their thought and incorporated it in our theology and our ecclesiasticism. If our secular life became thus pervaded by the traditions of a northern paganism, it ought not to surprise us that paganism entered our church services, our systems of theology, and our church life. By the fifteenth century Christianity was so modified by the legalism of Judaism and by the paganism of the barbarians that it is difficult to say how much of the Christian churches was Christian and how much was pagan. They had borrowed certain essential features from paganism. Christian theologians believed and taught that God was a wrathful God, whose wrath must be appeased. They believed and taught that a great gulf stretched between this God and his children, so that he must be interceded with by the Son, and the Son must be interceded with by the Virgin Mary, and the Virgin Mary must be interceded with by the saints, and the saints must be interceded with by the priests. So far had ecclesiastical teachers gone from the teach-

ing of Christ that God is like the father who ran out to meet the wayward son when the son turned toward home.¹

It is true that pagan sacrifices were no longer offered, but there was a temple and an altar. It is true that the Levitical sacrifices were no longer offered and no bloody torrent poured down from the altar to be carried away by underground conduits ; but in place of these bloody sacrifices was what is known as the bloodless sacrifice of the mass. The doctrine was taught that the priest, who must be the intermediary between man and God, offered in every communion service a real sacrifice in which he poured out the actual blood of Christ and in which he broke his actual body. The sacrifice was offered afresh every Sabbath day. That is the doctrine of the mass in the Roman Catholic Church to the present time.

While thus theologians borrowed theology and ceremonialism from paganism, they borrowed legalism from the Jews. One could reach the mercy of God only through the intercession of priests. He could reach it only through a bloodless sacrifice. But he could also reach it only by obedience to the laws of God as they were embodied in an elaborate ritualism. The disciple must come to the priest ; he must tell the priest what he had done, and the priest prescribed the things which he must do to

¹ This is not saying that this was the official and authoritative teaching of the Roman Church ; but it would be easy to show that it was taught, without serious protest, in the Roman Church.

win back the lost favor of God — the penances he must suffer, the money he must pay, the pilgrimages he must make, the duties he must perform.

Thus there was in mediævalism an intermingling of paganism and Judaism, but an intermingling also of Christianity. For under the Greek philosophy no prayers, no entreaties, no sacrifices, could avail to placate the wrath of the avenging Nemesis following close on the heels of the sinner. But in mediævalism there was mercy. Let the sinner escape to the cathedral doors, enter, lay hold, as it were, on the horns of the altar, submit himself to the priest's direction, accept the benefit of the bloodless sacrifice of the mass, obey directions and perform the prescribed penance, and he would have mercy; the avenging Nemesis would stay his footsteps, the penalty would not fall upon him, he would be forgiven. Thus mediævalism borrowed forgiveness from Christ, law from Judaism, sacrifice from paganism, and intermingled them in one common amalgam.

In the sixteenth century arose Luther. He had studied the Bible; especially the Gospels and the writings of Paul. He had been spurred to read them by the wretchedness of a heart tossed and tortured by the belief that he must buy the favor of God. He learned from Paul and from Christ another lesson — the lesson of the unbought love of God. He repudiated the whole intercessory system, the whole sacrificial system, the whole legalistic system of Rome, and declared that no

intercession was necessary. Every man shall give account of himself : that was his first declaration. There is nothing to be paid for God's favor and forgiveness : that was his second. Justification by faith was his fundamental tenet ; the doctrine that it is enough to accept the life which God freely gives.

Thus Christianity received a fresh equipment of life through Luther. Lutheranism was a revival of Paulinism. If all Protestants had been as radical as Luther, the Christian world would have made more rapid progress toward Christian life and Christian liberty. But progress in the world is very slow, and Protestantism resumed in a different form phases of paganism and Judaism from which Luther would have emancipated it. It presently divided into two streams, and in these two streams were seen, in varying ratios, the pagan element of sacrifice and the Jewish element of law. On the one hand, there still remained in the Lutheran and the Anglican communions the temple, the altar, the sacrifice, though greatly modified from the Roman Catholic forms. On the other hand, there remained in the Puritan churches the conception of law : the notion that men cannot be acceptable to God except by obedience to certain laws, ceremonial or ethical. Sometimes it was, You must be baptized by immersion or you cannot enter the church. Sometimes it was, You must pay particular observance to a particular day or you cannot be a good Christian. Sometimes it

was, You must obey the Ten Commandments, or the epitome of the Ten Commandments — the two commandments, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself — or you cannot receive the love of God. But in all these forms of teaching, the doctrine was taught that the only way to win God's love is by obedience to God's law ; that his love must be bought by obedience, ceremonial or ethical. The doctrine that God's love is freely given to the undeserving was practically, if not in words, denied.

Thus there grew up in the Reformed Churches these two elements intermingling with Christianity which we have seen before intermingling — the paganism that demanded a sacrifice, and the legalism that demanded obedience, before one could be a child of God. And still the voice of Paul might have been heard, if the clamor of theological controversy had not deafened the ears of men, and still what Paul would have been saying would have been this : "For his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins." Nevertheless there was more Christianity, more gospel, more Paulinism, in the Reformed churches than in the Roman Church, as there was more in the Roman Church than there was in the Jewish Church. Paganism said there must be sacrifices, and their value is dependent upon the cost of the object sacrificed ; men must be ready to sacrifice their own sons in order that

they may placate the wrath of God. Leviticalism had said : An ox, a lamb, a pair of doves, a sheaf of wheat, will suffice. Romanism had said : Neither ox, nor lamb, nor pair of doves, nor sheaf of wheat is needed ; a bloodless sacrifice will suffice. Protestantism said : If you will only believe that some one else has offered the sacrifice for you, that is sufficient. The sacrifice was banished from the temple and the altar to the creed.

I shall not attempt here to trace still further the progress of Paulinism. I shall not try to point out how the two Wesleys, John and Charles, brought a larger gospel to the world and re-repeated the message of Paul — the unbought love of God. They taught, indeed, that there had been a sacrifice and that it was necessary, but they taught that the sacrifice had provided a free gift of love and life for all, which all might have who would take it. They gave Paul's message of free grace, though they based it on a foundation other than that of Paul. I shall not try to point out how this message of free grace was repeated again by Coleridge in philosophy ; by Robertson and Maurice and Erskine, prophets of the Old World ; by Horace Bushnell and Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks, prophets of the New World. It is not necessary further to elucidate my proposition that the history of actual organic Christianity through the ages is the history of the intermingling of these three conceptions : The pagan conception of God as one whose wrath must be satisfied by a sacri-

fice; the Jewish conception of God as a Lawgiver who can be approached only by obedience to his laws; and the Christian conception of God as a Father who gives life freely to all who will accept the gift.

Still these three ideas are strangely intermingled in our conglomerate theology. Still the gospel of God's infinite and unpurchasable love finds its way gradually, slowly, but surely, to the hearts of the children of men. For Paul was not only in advance of his own time; he is still in advance of all times. Wherever we find in modern theology the doctrine taught that man can be saved only by a sacrifice offered to placate the wrath of an angry God, we find a relic of paganism. Wherever we find the doctrine taught that man can trust the love of God only as he has first proved himself a righteous man by obeying the law of God, we find a relic of Judaism. Wherever we find men putting up an altar and a sacrifice and a priest, and insisting upon it that only through the altar, the sacrifice, and the priest can one come to God, we find a relic of paganism. Wherever we find men putting up a law, whether ceremonial or ethical, and teaching that there is no way to acceptance with God except through water baptism — sprinkling or immersion — or that there is no acceptance with God except by compliance with some ritual or ceremony, or insisting that the essence of the gospel is the Ten Commandments, or the epitome of the Ten Commandments — Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul, and thy neighbor as thyself — insisting, in other words, that the essence of the gospel message is not what God does for man, but what man should do for God, we find essential Judaism. And wherever we find the message that God is infinite and eternal love, that the way to his heart is always open, that he gives life without price, whether we find it in the free gospel of the Methodist, or in the large and spiritual teaching of such ministers as Brooks and Beecher and Maurice and Robertson, or in such movements as the Keswick Movement, so called, or such ministries as the ministry of the so-called Higher Life, or such theologies as the misnamed New Theology, we find a revival of Paul's teaching. Whatever there is in the teaching of Jesus Christ that seems to confirm the notion that a sacrifice is necessary to appease the wrath of an angry God — and confessedly there is very little such in his teaching, almost nothing but his institution of the Lord's Supper, and his interpretation of it in the sixth chapter of John — it is capable of a much clearer, simpler, and more rational and spiritual interpretation. Wherever there is such language in Paul's epistles, it is because he uses the language of a philosophy he does not believe in order that he may counteract it. And wherever it is found in the Old Testament, it is the expression of an as yet imperfect spiritual apprehension of God and God's love as the secret of man's true life.

There is a sacrifice. But it is not a sacrifice

which man offers to God ; it is a sacrifice which God offers for man. *There is an intercession.* But it is not an intercession which man must make to secure the favor of God ; it is the intercession which God makes with man to bring his erring child back to him again. *There is a priest*, if a priest means one who stands between God and man, to bring man and God together ; but this priest comes from God to man in Jesus Christ to reveal the divine love, infinite and eternal, to his blind and erring child, not from man to God to find a mercy hard to be entreated. *There is a law of God* — the law of his own infinite and blessed life ; the law which we observe, not that we may receive that life, but because we have received it. The earth does not yield its flowers to beseech the shining of the sun ; the sun bathes the winter-clad earth that the earth may be clad in flowers. This is the gospel of Paul. By God's free gift we are saved ; "not of works ; we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Earth gets its price for what earth gives us :

The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in ;

The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us ;

We bargain for the graves we lie in.

At the devil's booth are all things sold,

Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold ;

For a cap and bells our lives we pay ;

Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking :

'T is heaven alone that is given away,

'T is only God may be had for the asking.¹

¹ James Russell Lowell, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*.

The Riverside Press

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS U. S. A.

ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED BY

H. O. HOUGHTON AND CO.

1 1012 01252 4825

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